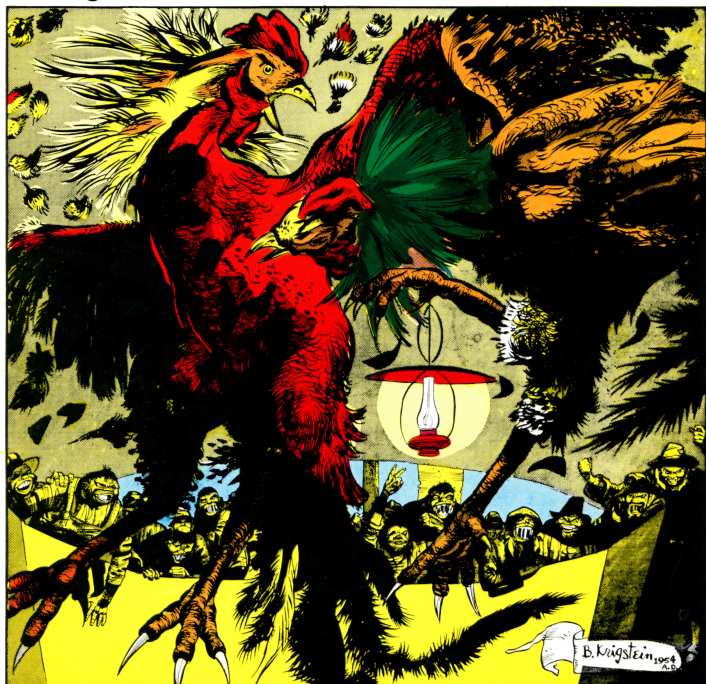


# SQUA TRONT

6



SPECIAL ISSUE: BERNARD KRIGSTEIN

# SQUA TRONT

no. 6

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The cover is the splash panel from "The JIL." The unidentified bathroom page scattered through the issue were originally done for William Condes and were later adapted by Krigeisen for use as illustration material.

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# Interview with BERNARD KRIGEISEN

## IN THE BAG

STEWART: Have you ever thought of doing a syndicated strip?

KRIGEISEN: I never seriously pursued the idea of syndication. I never profoundly interested me. I think the reason is that I wasn't able to find an outlet in syndicated form for the sort of things that I'd like to do. In fact, I always found comic books more interesting than syndicated material simply from a formal point of view, because of the possibilities of the form itself. It's just a matter of space. I felt that one couldn't really do anything artistically interesting, except in humor, in one daily strip or even a full weekend page. At Capp is a marvelous example of what can be done in humor, and I think a couple of Roth's strips, too, were wonderful examples of what could be done in humor in a one page type of thing. But what I was always interested in was in extensive development of a story, and the way syndication is set up it's antagonistic to that kind of idea.

STEWART: You have no chance to experiment with layout, the way you can on a full page.

KRIGEISEN: Well, no... I think that a very good artist can experiment with layout, but what I'm discussing is extended dramatic development, and this is what really always interested me in comics—the fact that one could develop a dramatic idea, more or less like a play. And it would be kind of absurd to have a one page serial of a dramatic play appear, say, every week, and that's the same sort of inhibition that existed for me. And this is not to say I would be welcomed with open arms in the strip field; it's just that I never pushed very hard in that direction.

STEWART: Do you feel that you have found a stronger relationship between comics and the stage than between comics and films? It seemed that you had a kind of editing technique by breaking up one panel into smaller panels for dramatic effect.

KRIGEISEN: Well, I love plays, and I did find an analogy between comics and plays... and movies. I didn't feel there was any real difference between a play and a movie as far as inspiration for a comic book artist was concerned. They both could equally serve as sources of inspiration, or an ideal for a cartoonist to look toward in his work. But I do want to say that the comic strip itself is a form all on its own. I don't look upon it as being sort of a foster child of the film form or a play form. It has its own dramatic problems and possibilities, although there are areas where all of these overlap, and where they are all identical.

STEWART: We were aware that you had adapted film technique to comics when we found a panel in "In the Bag" where you had drawn the effect of the headlights of a car reflecting on a camera lens.

This is an expanded and revised version of an interview which took place on August 18, 1962 and was first published as a mimeographed monograph entitled *Libra Stewart and John Benson Talk with R. Krigeisen in 1962*. For this republication, the original tapes have been reviewed to correct any inaccuracies. The new material is primarily based on later discussions with the artist over the years. Several paragraphs have been borrowed from "B. Krigeisen Interview," from *Chameleon #5*, with the permission of the editor/illustrator Erich Heinemann.

The logical references in the original interview have been retained, and all of the material that has been added pertains to the artist's work prior to 1962. The interview should therefore be read with the time frame in which it was recorded in mind. Krigeisen states that in some cases his opinions have changed in the intervening 13 year period.

THE ABOVE MENTIONED "IN THE BAG" STRIP WAS FIRST PUBLISHED IN THE "SQUA TRONT" #6, 1975 ISSUE. IT WAS ADAPTED FROM A STRIP BY KRIGEISEN WHICH WAS FIRST PUBLISHED IN THE "SQUA TRONT" #1, 1975 ISSUE.

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IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE THAT A STRIP LIKE "IN THE BAG" WAS EVER PUBLISHED IN A COMIC BOOK. IT WAS ADAPTED FROM A STRIP BY KRIGEISEN WHICH WAS FIRST PUBLISHED IN THE "SQUA TRONT" #1, 1975 ISSUE.



KRIGEISEN: That's definitely an occasion where it was a camera effect, but it was interchangeable with me. Sometimes I'd think in terms of a camera or a movie, and very often I'd think in terms of just a procedure stage, really. I'd have the same focus on a number of pictures, and I definitely wanted to have the opposite effect of movement or of a camera. I desired to stop all action and make everything still and repetitious, and come back and again, and keep repeating the effect for whatever end purpose would result. I'm fascinated by movies. But I feel that to attempt to make a movie out of a comic strip is simply to be unfaithful to movies. Really, you can not love movies as a form if you do that.

STEWART: Who are your favorite filmmakers or your



favorite film!

KRIGSTEIN: Well, my favorite films are drawn from anywhere and everywhere; American film, French film, Russian film. Some of the early Russian films like Dornhenko and Eisenstein, particularly Dornhenko. Some of the real old French film I just love.

STEWART: Rules of the Game?

KRIGSTEIN: Rules of the Game; tremendous, quite tremendous. Then there are some new things, like L'Avventura, that I admired very much. I felt a very great kinship for what that man was doing, and I knew exactly what was in his heart when he was doing these things... the marvelous leisurely ironic stillness, holding your attention on a sunset or a seascape. These are things that I felt a very great kinship with.

STEWART: L'Avventura seems like a film you would appreciate. Just as you are conscious of the panel, Antonioni is very conscious of the picture frame, with actors moving in and out of it, at distances, and in closeup.

KRIGSTEIN: And then there's Fellini; Nights of Cabiria. There's nothing spectacular about the technique of that film, and some of the others I like; it's just that they are tremendous stories. This doesn't hold true for L'Avventura, of course.

STEWART: Some time ago I wrote an article analyzing your work, but I'm not sure what I said, because I haven't been able to find a copy of it.

KRIGSTEIN: As a matter of fact, I have a copy of it. I was extremely pleased by the things you wrote, and I thought you fulfilled a very important function as a critic of the form at that time. I thought that the form was worthy of a critic, and I thought that your criticism was worthy of the form.

STEWART: I think that I said that you built moods in your stories by a certain way that you paced. For example, there are stories that have a violent climax which intrudes on a calm mood that you have established with the art in the preceding piece. I think Hitchcock did the same thing in Psycho, where everything is still and quiet before the violent scenes, with slow moving camerawork and little sound, and then everything hits you with full force—Herrmann's shrieking music, quick cutting, etc. In other words, like you, he's using his medium for psychological effect.

KRIGSTEIN: I think that I was striving to make these effects, that is, building up to dramatic climaxes and then realizing, as far as it was in my power to do so, all the emotional force of the climax. And I think I succeeded pretty well, because in groping towards something I really feel as if I stumbled upon an important way to tell stories, to break down stories. As things worked out, I wasn't able to continue. Soon after that I had to leave the field.

STEWART: Did EC give you more freedom to...

KRIGSTEIN: Yes. EC really provided the atmosphere of freedom and artistic encouragement. They allowed me to...

allowed all the guys there to develop their own personal ideas. Of course there were many conflicts, as there would be in any creative organization. But the overall thing is that Bill Gaines did permit this freedom, and he did permit, as I see it, something quite wonderful to develop.

STEWART: What are your particular favorites of your stories for EC?

KRIGSTEIN: My one favorite was a concentration camp story...

STEWART: "Master Race." We aren't able to reveal that last night.

KRIGSTEIN: I have a copy of it here. [He brings out a file of his stories. A number of the interviewers' questions stem from looking over the file.] In that one I think I reached a high point in developing my breakdown ideas.

STEWART: Do you think if we went over it, that you could speak to exactly what you were doing? Or do you think it speaks for itself?

KRIGSTEIN: I think the story should speak for itself. I don't think I should point out what I think happens here. Whatever happens should happen in the viewer.

But I do want to mention that that was originally given to me as a five page story, and I persuaded Foldstein and Garmy to let me make it into an eight or nine page story. And I cut the thing apart and repasted it and relaid it out and redesigned it in order to realize my ideas of developing the breakdown of the story. I happen to be extremely proud of it; I think it's a very serious effort. And I don't know if I'm being very self-indulgent, but I think that it does something very new as far as breakdown is concerned.

By the way, they held that story for about ten months after I brought it in. I think they didn't know what to do with it. Every time I came in the office, I'd urge them to run it. I kept telling them the story had impact. I kept emphasizing that, and then when it finally came out, it was in the first issue of Impact. I always thought they got the title from me, the way I kept emphasizing that word. But I never asked them if that was the case.

STEWART: This panel really captures the impression of a passing subway train. It's an awful way to do that.

KRIGSTEIN: It's really a futuristic device.

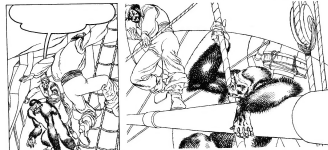
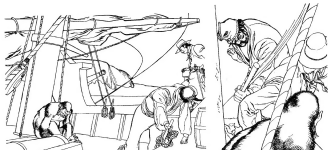
STEWART: Like Balls.

KRIGSTEIN: And Severini, and—who did "Nude Descending Staircase"—Duchamp.

STEWART: Have you seen George Tooker's painting of the subway?

KRIGSTEIN: No, I haven't. I never knew he did one. I'm a great admirer of his work. I wonder if you've seen his painting called "The Sleepers"? It's a very remarkable piece.

STEWART: Yes. In some ways it's related to a painter... I can't remember his name. Maybe you know his painting of a summer camp; there's a weird little guy reading a book and eyeing this almost caricatured muscular type, and a fat



unturned ween is walking down the boardwalk.

KRISTEIN: Is that Paul Cadmus?

STEWART: Yes, that's it. I think he's terrific.

KRISTEIN: Yes, he is.

BENSON: Did you make stipulations as to how your stories were to be colored?

KRISTEIN: No, Marie Severin did a wonderful job. She was a wonderful artist in her own right, and very often she should have shared a lot of credit with the artist for the way she colored the thing. There's only one fault that I found with this particular story ["Master Race"]. One of the characters is wearing overalls, and when she colored it she colored the strap of the overalls the same as the skirt and obscured the idea that the man was wearing overalls. And when I costume people, I always have very definite things in mind. Aside from that minor lapse...

STEWART: We had the idea that you talked about what kind of colors to use, because full panels of red seemed characteristic of your stories, like "Delirium" and "The Pit." And this never seemed to be done with the other EC stories.

KRISTEIN: I don't recall. I think that in certain panels I may have suggested something, because I know that on a particular cover we had discussed color.

BENSON: But on that Piracy cover the colors blended; there were no pen and ink lines to follow.

KRISTEIN: Right. In fact, I had done outlines which would disappear in reproduction as a guide in the color breakdown. I think there were two that I did like that. I recall that there was quite an argument about the one of a man with a longbow. My original design called for an overpowering sun that practically filled the cover, and Feldstein insisted on the cover as it was eventually run. I thought it was a great mistake, that Feldstein's restrictive concept of realism really destroyed the psychological impact



COVER: KRISTEIN; PIRACY: EC; L. & J. © 1975 BY MARC W. GARDNER

that was the whole purpose of the picture.

STEWART: It also seemed that the characters in your stories were often colored as neoblasts.

KRISTEIN: Well, perhaps that's because most of the artists would ink the hair black, but I would often manually delineate the hair, and leave that decision to the colorist, and Marie was so unused to seeing that, she would make them redheads or blondes.

STEWART: What did you think of Jack Davis's cover illustrating "Master Race"?

KRISTEIN: I was somewhat disappointed that they chose Davis to do the cover. Jack is a good artist, but the spirit of his work does not combine with mine. What I think happened in this case was that the character he created lost the seriousness of the theme of the story. He became a "crime" character, rather than representative of an idea. Jack did a "crime" cover. It was a wonderful cover, but not for the story. I'm not criticizing Davis, because I like his work very much.

BENSON: Did you ever do any preliminary sketches when you were doing your EC stories?

KRISTEIN: For EC, no, I worked directly on the pages. I did do preliminary sketches for some book covers and record jackets. And for paintings, of course.

BENSON: If you had had a chance, would you have wanted to cut down on a lot of Feldstein's text?

KRISTEIN: No. Feldstein and I had a conflict, but it wasn't over cutting down on the text. What I wanted to do was this: I wanted to use all the text which was necessary for the literary enrichment of the story. In other words, the complexity of ideas needs a complex text. But what I was fighting against all the time was that the text should be expanded at the expense of the story. What I would have



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wanted to do would be to expand the story so that the pictures would take up more room. In other words, in his five page stories, I would have wanted to do that in about fifteen pages. Keep the same amount of text. This is exactly the ground that he and I went over time and time again.

BENSON: The reason I asked is that often I felt that his text was just saying the same thing the pictures were, only not as well; merely describing the pictures.

KRISTEIN: That's only because he didn't give the artist enough room to really illustrate the ideas expressed in the text and therefore the total effect was one of redundancy, or repetition, rather than an expansion of the original.

STEWART: Did they know before you turned in "Master Race" that you had expanded it?

KRISTEIN: Yes. What happened was that I received this five page story and read it, and it was just the most explosive story that I had ever come across in my work in the field. I called Bill up and told him that I wanted to do it as a twelve page, and he immediately came back with, "Twelve pages, it's impossible!" And then he told me that he couldn't do it because it would be an expense to have it retitled, which was an amusing reason to give. And then I said, "You won't have to retitle it; I'll cut it up." I like the story as well, I'll cut it up and paste it down on new pages." Now this was such a ridiculous thing for any artist to do, but I felt the story was worth anything.

Finally we agreed on I forget whether it was eight or nine pages. I think that we were fighting back and forth for space, and he offered nine and then called back and said he couldn't let me have more than eight. And then, finally, while I was in

the middle of the story (and nobody had seen what I was doing with it), he called me up and said, "I'm kinda worried, Bernie. I think we made a mistake. I don't think you should have expanded it at all." So I told him that it wasn't my mistake, and I convinced him that I was doing something very good with it. When I brought the pencils in, Feldstein and Bill agreed that it was worth the expansion.

But if only—and this I felt for years afterwards—if only they would have allowed me to continue on this track. If I could have expanded the material there, I felt that I could have done very new and good things. And all these years, frankly, I have been nurturing that frustration. I've done many things since then; books, record albums, book jackets, and so on, and I've been very happy with the stuff I've been doing, but I always nurtured this feeling that something tremendous could have been done if they'd let me do it.

STEWART: Did you have any ideas for story experiments, or...

KRISTEIN: Oh, yes. I kept approaching Al to give me his regular manuscript which I thought were terrific, but I wanted to re-break them down in my style. In fact, I wanted to edit a book. I wanted to devote one book to a single story. STEWART: I always wanted to see that done, too.

KRISTEIN: And if he wouldn't give me one book, I asked him to give me, say, twelve pages—just let me expand a five page story into twelve pages and break it down in my style, because I had all these things that were nothing in my mind. And then he would come back and say, "I'll give you a five page story, and you can break it down any way you want—within five pages." It was ridiculous. He wanted me to subdivide it, in other words; to take a six panel page and create a fifteen panel page. Well, that was getting a lot for your money. If you get fifteen panels on a page, that sounds like a good proposition.

Meanwhile, they were getting desperate, and they were taking their rich story material and cutting them down from seven pages to six pages to five pages. In other words, they were doing precisely the opposite of what they should have been doing! Instead of expanding and penetrating into the meat of the story, and enriching the dramatic effect, they were compressing it from the outside and were just working against themselves.

STEWART: Where you have broken up panels, if you had been given more space, would you have made these much bigger? Would you have broken up the panels differently?

KRISTEIN: Not necessarily. I might have rearranged the text, and then again I might not. I might have let the captions run over three panels. But where I have three panels, I might have put in nine panels. Because it's what happens between



I STEP OUT OF THE DOORWAY AS HE CHARGES ME  
HE BRIMS AROUND! I'M NOT THERE! I SCREAM THE TRIGGER, BLASTING HIS FACE AWAY IN A RED STREAK



COVER: KRISTEIN; PIRACY: EC; L. & J. © 1975 BY MARC W. GARDNER

COVER: KRISTEIN; PIRACY: EC; L. & J. © 1975 BY MARC W. GARDNER



these panels that's so fascinating. Look at all that dramatic action that you never gets a chance to see. It's between these panels that the fascinating story takes place. And unless the artist would be permitted to devote into that, the form must remain inflexible.

STEWART: In "The Catacombs," did you have to cut up any of the lettering to do this?

KRIGSTEIN: No, that was unnecessary, because had I simply followed what was expected of me there, for example, this would have been one panel here with these two characters talking to each other. One balloon would have gone to this character and one would have gone to the second character.

NEVERGUST, BING BENT TO GATHER UP THE SILVER, AND AS HE, PIETRO SLUNG A SWITCHBLADE FROM HIS POCKET. HE FLICKED OPEN A LONG, SCALPEL-SHARP BLADE.

"FIVE OR SIX THOUSAND LIFE. "I AM THINKING OF PIETRO JUST THINK OF IT?"



Instead, I divided that into two panels in order to get more movement and richer dramatic feeling. In other words, I multiplied the amount of action that was going on from one panel to two.

The layout of the first page was entirely my idea. What was expected there was one large splash panel and one panel underneath. But I did not cut that up and repaste it as far as I can recollect. I remember when I spoke to Johnny Craig, who was the editor of that book, I said, "I don't want to do that splash page that you have for me. I want to split it up in a number of panels." And I made a very quick rough sketch of how I wanted it done. Johnny's first reaction was that he couldn't do it. And then he said he'd have to discuss it with Bill, and I think he did. In any case, I got the OK to do it, and it was welcomed. I don't think I cut it apart, but I remember very clearly that I had difficulty being able to break it up.

"The Catacombs" was my first exciting experiment in pre-splitting up panels. It was the first really exciting one. And I think it was the first time I actually tried to change the pre-learned pages, which was sort of a natural lead in for me to do it with "Master Race."

STEWART: In a way, that first page is like a "hooker" in a film before the credits.

KRIGSTEIN: In a way it is, but I didn't do it for that reason. It was simply greed on my part; I was merely robbing space to tell the story. I wanted panels; I was desperate for panels. And this is what they didn't give me, so, out of desperation, I began subdividing the panels. The point came when it was simply absurd to have six panels for a certain amount of text. I began to use twelve panels, 18 panels, in the same amount of text. I began to see these people doing all sorts of things, and it became just ridiculous to have them

doing all this stuff in six panels.

BENSON: But in a set of panels like this you have a tremendous amount of action, and then when the action slows down the panels get wider, square. The change of panel shape fits the mood, so wouldn't you still use these slender panels if you had been able to expand this as you wished?

KRIGSTEIN: I certainly would use the slender panels, definitely, because it has the staccato effect. It creates a certain rhythm; even the design of it has a certain rhythm.

STEWART: You must not have cared too much for their introduction of the story. I notice you've blocked out the Vault Keeper on your copy.

KRIGSTEIN: As a matter of fact, I always felt that they were intrusive. I always thought those things broke the mood of the story.

STEWART: Was that your idea in "The Catacombs" to have dialogue in quotes above the panels instead of using balloons?

KRIGSTEIN: Yes, that's entirely my idea. But it's not entirely a new thing. As you mentioned in your own article, the Flash Gordon strips used them.

STEWART: Yes, but you put them above the people who were speaking and Flash Gordon's old format was just like reading illustrated stories.

KRIGSTEIN: Right. I didn't want that effect. I wanted to integrate story and pictures and at the same time retain the identity of the pictures without having the balloon destroy the formal design.

STEWART: That's interesting, because I have an idea that there are some comic book stories, particularly yours, that could be filmed using photomontage techniques.

KRIGSTEIN: The truth is that I've always wanted to see that story done that way. And I think that it could take a good musical accompaniment and a good narration. Or the viewer could read it, one way or the other. But I think it could stand that treatment. The story itself is strong enough.

STEWART: I feel that "The Flying Machine" is the greatest story that has ever appeared in comic books.

KRIGSTEIN: Thanks very much. I'm very proud of it. And I'm certainly glad that Bradbury himself wrote such a flattering letter about it. [Bradbury's letter is 85-F #25 read: "The finest single piece of art-drawing I've seen in the comics in years. Beautiful work! I was so touched and pleased..."]

BENSON: He's quite interested in comic strips.

KRIGSTEIN: I realize that, and knowing that I have been interested in doing a book of his. You know, I have wanted very much to do a full length comic book.

BENSON: I just said last night, when we were going over your stories, that it would be great to see you do a full length Fantastich 451.

KRIGSTEIN: That's exactly the one I wanted to do! And I approached Ballantine about that. I spoke to his editor; I spoke to Ballantine himself. And unfortunately he nixed the idea. I've been trying to push the idea of a full length book in general, of some classic story adapted to comic book form. I wanted to do The Red Badge of Courage. In fact, I went so far as to break down a couple of pages, and I submitted them to Ballantine. I have those breakdowns right here. I also approached Simon and Schuster with the idea.

I feel a clause of this kind should be rendered in this form. Of course, there's a tremendous amount of prejudice against doing it. But I think that there would be a fantastic audience for it. And I think it would surprise people as to who would go for these books; quite sophisticated people.

BENSON: When did you approach Ballantine? Was it after he had started to publish comics?

KRIGSTEIN: I approached Ballantine long before he published comics. And after I approached him, and after I was rejected, I was amazed that he was publishing comics.

# The CATACOMBS

PIETRO MUTA...

...GRABBED THE SACK WITH ITS LOAD OF SILVER...



...AND, WITH SING ALCAIRI...

FOLLOWING...



...BROKE FOR THE FRONT DOOR!



By F. F. F.

AS THE FRIGHTENED PAIR FLED DOWN THE STREET, THE STARTLED CRIES OF THE ROBBERD OLD MAN THAT—TERED THE STILLNESS, THEN DRIFTED OFF INTO THE SILENT DARKNESS...





STEWART: What size or format would this be?  
KRIGSTEIN: Well, that was the least important thing, really. I would have done it in paperback form and have the work appear sideways. I could adapt it to any shape. The important thing is the continuity of the panels.

BENSON: And you could adapt the entire novel?  
KRIGSTEIN: Yes; maybe hundreds of pages, or whatever the number of pages it would run to. But as I look at these sample breakdowns, even then I didn't do it the way I would do it now. I still didn't give enough space to the pictures. I would make it even more pictorial in proportion to the number of words that it has been. I'd expand this passage here, where he's running desperately; I'd expand it much more. And this one passage here, where the regiment is swinging from its position, could practically be a story in itself.

I'd have broader monumental breathtaking sweeping panoramas of the armies. I'd want to convey the notion of the enormity of it and then the contrast of the microscopic things going on inside of this enormity. And I would expand these sequences in order to elaborate on the microscopic things happening to where they'd have the character of deep stories. And the whole thing would be a collection of many short stories into one huge monumental panorama. These rough still do not convey my real approach, what I would do right now. But some parts of it I find very satisfactory anyway.

BENSON: Actually, you'd have to excise some portions of the novel so that you could treat other portions fully the way you wanted to.

KRIGSTEIN: Exactly. But on the other hand, while cutting out stuff from one point of view, I would insist on an open-ended expansion from an editorial point of view. It might take 100 pages, or I'd like to have the freedom to take 1,000 pages for the same amount of text. I'd like to have no limit on the amount of space for pictures. But now I'm fantasizing; what I'm saying now is pure fantasy.

That would be a monumental enormous project. It means that every single one of these panels has to be a picture, a real picture, without compromising. I couldn't rely that much on close-ups, either. I'd make it much more pictorial.

BENSON: It's interesting that your *Hillman* work is much more pictorial and has fewer close-ups than your *EC* work.

KRIGSTEIN: But you eliminated the close-ups in the *EC* material, what would remain would be the pictorial *Hillman* style. In other words, the close-ups were in addition to the pictorial element. I started out pictorially; that was really my main interest. And I became deeply interested in the connections, using close-ups to connect these pictorial elements, and so I expanded that aspect of it.

If I would go back to work, and if I had the most ideal conditions and unlimited time, I would now expand the pictorial thing, and add that still further. In my mind's eye, I just see a very monumentally expanded kind of pictorial thing. But you know, I'm just dreaming.

Massoud: I think attempted this huge pictorial approach. And I'm thinking of Gustave Doré, too, where every one of his illustrations was tremendous.

BENSON: What did you think of John Huston's film of *The Red Badge of Courage*?

KRIGSTEIN: I liked it. It was much better than one could expect at that time from anybody else. But I still thought it wasn't the definitive movie of that story. It was not.

Here's a breakdown I did of a section of *Treasure Island* for Harvey at EC, and it went through. I had talked to Harvey about my idea of doing classics, and he had asked me to do a breakdown, to see what I had in mind, and I went ahead and broke down this section of *Treasure Island*. Jerry DePuccio said that he had a copy of the book which he would lend me, and I told him that I would mark it up, which I did. I took a section of it, and I marked out passages of dialogue and



description. And I numbered each one in sequence so that simply by looking at that book and the way it was marked up, one could see the way I broke it down. And I gave that book back to Jerry, which really with I hadn't done. But this is my rough break down of that. The art itself is indicated in a most elementary manner, but I think the words are all there.

BENSON: I notice that you have a lot of captions here. Did you feel in any way intimidated into leaving the words...

KRIGSTEIN: I didn't use all the words in the book. The breakdown is not fully resolved; the sequence is there and the words that I would employ have been kept. But within this form I would break it down and refine it still further. This is just a first draft.

By the way, here's a manuscript of something I've written within the past year.

STEWART: "The Most Popular Movie in the World"; that's a terrific title. Is this a script for a comic book?

KRIGSTEIN: There's no reason why it couldn't be used in any form: a comic book, a live action film, or an animated cartoon. I even thought of it as a play, if I could get people interested in producing it. I will say that it's been rejected by every publisher I've sent it to. I sent it to Harvey Kurtzman, incidentally, when *Help* was going strong. Lyle Stuart turned it down too.

By the way, here's my breakdown of a story, "A Man of Importance," that Lyle Stuart wrote for me during the latter days of my stay at EC. I don't know if this is a first version or what; it's totally crude.

I also wanted very much to do parts of *War and Peace* by Tolstoy. I showed Harvey these breakdowns for that, back when we were at EC. It could very well have fit into his format, but he didn't want it at that time. I think this is a pretty clear breakdown of how I would have done it. It was a favorite project of mine.

BENSON: Which part of *War and Peace* is this?





what the writer called for was something quite different.

STEWART: I think this is great; building up this whole thing with bones.

KRISTEIN: I was playing around with layers of tone sheets there. I think these mechanical devices are a legitimate artistic means, and they're too easily and too quickly passed over on the grounds that they're mechanical, which is a philistine rationalization of unskilled people. I explored the possibilities of those sheets in comics and I continued to use them in other markets. They can be used to evoke a total quality reminiscent of the great engravings of the 18th century. I sort of insinuated them into many important illustration jobs, partly to make that statement that the use of them is legitimate—that there is a relationship between the finest sort of expression and comic book expression.

STEWART: In this story, were you trying, by squaring off everything at right angles, to build up the complete idea of the title, "Monotony"?

## MONOTONY



KRISTEIN: Oh, very definitely. It was an attempt to break down, to satirize that particular type of character. Now that you mention it, in your article you took exception to the fact that the books are in duress, which is inconsistent with the general precision of the layout. How do you feel about that now?

STEWART: Now I realize that you were trying to break up a static composition.

KRISTEIN: Right.

STEWART: When you signed "You, Murderer" "Dr. Caligari Krysteine," were you in any way emulating the film Caligari?

KRISTEIN: No, it was just that I felt that there is a similarity of genre, that's all. Both very weird, and rather

expressionistic.

BENSON: Did you have any qualms about doing the horror stuff?

KRISTEIN: No, I didn't. I guess there's a dark side of me that accepted them. I recall that Harvey thought they were terrible and we had some discussions where he would suggest that I refuse to do the horror stories. There was one scene that I did regret doing afterward; I think it was in "The Fudge."

But the bulk of my work for EC was not horror stories. I did a much science fiction for Gaines as horror. And the kind

## MARBLER



of horror stories that I was given really were not on the blood and gore side. It wasn't that I said anything, I think that Gaines and Faldstein were psychologically perceptive enough to know which people would like what kind of stories. It was part of their job to channel suitable material to the artists.

STEWART: This is a rare opportunity for me to see this 3-D story in single image, because I can't see 3-D so I was never able to read it in the comics.

KRISTEIN: Well, that's the smallest part of it.

BENSON: When you did the 3-D, did you start with the sheet that had the most on it, or did you start at the top?

KRISTEIN: My general system—I don't know about the 3-D things—is to work from the bottom up.

BENSON: I mean sheetwise; which layer did you start with?

KRISTEIN: Oh, I don't recall now how I did that. I forget the technicalities involved there. It was really fun to do, because you were forced to analyze space relationships, and it was a marvelous test of composition. If you were a phony composer, your 3-D would look ridiculous. You were forced to use very honest perspective. But personally, I don't see any time for 3-D stuff, despite the fact that some good things may



Below is a scene from one of Krigein's two 3-D stories, "The Monster from the Fourth Dimension." Above is Al Feldstein's earlier rendering of the same two panels.



be done. It's just a trick, and has nothing to do with the emotional force of the breakdown of the story.

STEWART: You have a knack, it seems to me, for capturing certain human poses that other artists and illustrators always seem to miss. And I can think of specific examples, like in "The Bath," this guy with his shoulders hunched up while he's getting in the bath.

KRIGSTEIN: I'm glad you noticed that particular thing. When I drew it, I was very conscious that I was representing a very human action.

STEWART: Another thing related to that is that you sometimes draw feet from animal angles, for example, from a three-quarter low view.



KRIGSTEIN: Maybe it's because I have such a strong hostility to common mores in illustration. The ideals that are conveyed and accepted by most illustrators are very foreign to me. The ideals of movement, the ideals of human beings that they use as prototypes are extremely foreign to me and unreal. I think they're unreal to everyone, and I think that it's a phony kind of glamor that most illustration is loyal to. I have an extreme hostility to it, and probably it is because of that hostility that I almost perversely steer clear of these stereotypes, and I deliberately use almost, one might say, ugly, or revealing human things, because I think that they are beautiful. I think that these ugly things that people do are really beautiful; they are real. And I just despise this so-called beautiful packaging that illustrators do. I can't stand it, and I'll do my damndest to destroy it by my work, that is, and if I can get people to see things my way, so much the better.

STEWART [facetiously]: You probably never worked for The Saturday Evening Post.

KRIGSTEIN: No, and I never made the effort to. But I wouldn't make any blanket condemnation, or approval, of any publication or organization. [Krigein did eventually contribute to The Saturday Evening Post.]

STEWART: Who are your favorite illustrators, in retrospect?

KRIGSTEIN: You know, I don't have any. I seek my inspiration elsewhere. If anything, they are the old time illustrators, like Howard Pyle, or the old American painters. Winslow Homer is to me one of the greatest artist-illustrators that we ever had.

STEWART: Most people don't know of his pictures when he did try to capture human characteristics, all his people on beaches and things. People only know his seascapes.

KRIGSTEIN: That's unfortunate, because I think his greatest work is the painting and drawing of people; and his Civil War things, his illustrations for Herpes of the Civil War are his greatest. These are the guys that inspire me... Berensadt, and a couple of other early American Remington, of course, is great. But the really greatest of them all is Winslow Homer. These are the artists that inspire me very much.

STEWART: This is the best way that an illustrator should work, because most current illustrators are imitating other current illustrators. Like Bob Peake has all his little Bob Peake, and if never occurs to them that they could derive their inspiration from a more classical source.

BENSON: Were these two strips ever published?

KRIGSTEIN: Yes. These are two Sunday strips I penciled for Burns Hogarth. He first had somebody else on them and he wasn't happy with them and he asked me to do it. I thought it was awful. I tried to do something with it, keeping it light and airy, you know. And then he used this very heavy handed inkish style over it; and he made a few changes. I don't remember how much of this inked page actually reflects my work. I think I saw it and made sure to photograph the pencils for the second one. I found it very heavy handed and repulsive.

BENSON: What do you think of Harvey Kurtzman's art?

KRIGSTEIN: I think it's wonderful! He has developed a form of artistic abstraction that only a comic artist can. It's just nuts about Harvey's style. He has the ability to simplify and stylize... I felt it was a misfortune that his own personal art was not published as he did it, full of verve and originality, instead of being redrawn by another artist.

BENSON: Did you like Air dramatic camera?

KRIGSTEIN: I always liked the books Harvey did, I always regretted that we could never get together. I'd very much wanted to, and I did do one or two things, but somehow it never really worked out. We didn't work very smoothly together, and nothing ever really materialized.





Krigstein's first assignment at EC was to ink the story "A New Beginning" (Weird Science #22), which had been penciled by Al Williamson. When he brought in the inked story, Williamson was unhappy with the result and harshly rebuked it, calling in Frank Frazetta to help him meet the deadline. Some of the Krigstein inked panels remain in the finished story, on pages 6 and 7. Here is page 1 of "A New Beginning," printed for the first time as Krigstein inked it. Why portions of the page were left uninked is unknown. The splash panel is on the opposite page; the other two panels are printed below in a slightly smaller scale.

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STEWART: Tell us about the one story you did for Stan. KRIGSTEIN: Well, Harvey and I were always 'coquetting' with each other for a long period of time, and he suggested that one day he was going to use me, and I suggested that I was very receptive to the idea and quite interested in doing it. This lasted for a certain length of time and finally it came about that he had this story for me to do, which I was very happy to do.

I worked on the story, and he exhibited a very artistically liberal idea; he was never interested in seeing the pencils, I could bring him the finished. Which was slightly unorthodox, you see, because the usual manner... I had been working with Feldstein and although it was really purely a formal thing, I would bring the pencils in, and we would discuss it, and it would be extremely rare that Al would have any editorial comments to make. As I say, it was a pure formality; well, Harvey dispensed with the formality. I brought in the finished, and it happened that he wasn't there when I delivered them, and I left them there, and the next day I received a call from Harvey. It seems that he liked it very much, "bad..." And then he proceeded to ask me would I be adverse to the idea of doing the story over again, and he would be willing to pay me a certain amount of money in addition if I would, because it was not at all what he had in mind. And I was quite shocked by his proposal, and I told him that I wouldn't be able to do it again. What did you think of it?

STEWART: You had a much stronger sense of real caricature, delineating it, you know, than the other EC artists. Though I still lose what they did at EC, this kind of shaded caricature.

KRIGSTEIN: Well, I loved what the other people did there; I thought it was just great. But I also liked what I did. And I also resented very much the fact that Harvey had any preconceived notions of how I should execute a job. It seemed to me that that was entirely the province of the artist, and therefore I refused to do it over. I don't know if that was the last thing I did for Harvey...

BENSON: There was "Bringing Back Father," "Orchid Moon," and the Hemingway illustration.

KRIGSTEIN: Right. There again... You see, each time I'd get an assignment from him, it was quite foreign to me to do exactly what he had in mind. Harvey loved to do the breakdowns and prescribe what the artist would do, and I always felt that... I'm always glad to hear or see what an editor or an art director has to say. That's fine for a sort of document. I'll make a note of that and put it in my file. But I always have my own ideas about how to go about these things, and I always felt free to do so, and I didn't feel that Harvey was an exception in this regard. The same thing happened with the Hemingway thing. I brought back something which was quite different from what he had in mind. Each time we would get together it would result in this kind of crisis. And I regretted it very much, because I feel that Harvey is a truly talented person, a true talent. I have always felt this and I always wanted to work in his things. He was always doing something exciting and interesting. It was just regrettable that there should be this kind of...

BENSON: If you had worked in his serious comics, do you think this conflict would have lessened?

KRIGSTEIN: No, I don't. I think that there was an overlapping of functions which would always have meant a conflict. Harvey was deeply interested not only in the story but the breakdown, and breakdown to me is everything. Since we both overlapped on this function, there's always bound to be a conflict. And I certainly could not accept Harvey's breakdown ideas carte blanche, and so the situation was never resolved.

Harvey, I must say, always admired my inking; he always said that I was a marvelous inker.

STEWART: This leads us to the story about your collaboration with Al Williamson, because I think that Williamson was not happy with you taking.

KRISTEIN: Well, I wasn't happy with Williamson. I thought that it was silly of Bill Gaines to give me as a first assignment the job of working with Williamson. He and I didn't get along very well. He was a little too 'artistic' for me—the artistic type.

STEWART: What did you think of Williamson as an artist? KRISTEIN: I loved many of the stories that he handled in. I've heard it said, perhaps mistakenly, that he always worked with collaborators. One's never certain because their names often didn't appear on the credits. But I think that his stories had a very marvelous mood about them that nobody else captured. Although when I would go into it, there'd be a very peculiar reaction that I'd have that it was kind of put together from many sources, as if he'd done a kind of very clever marvelous paste-up job. I don't know why I had this reaction; there was a certain lack of unity. But he did some remarkable things.

BENSON: What about your collaboration with Reed Crandall for PictoFiction?

KRISTEIN: You mean where Reed finished the story I had started? I'm surprised that you recognized that it was a collaboration.

BENSON: It almost seemed to me at the time that you had done some of the taking and he had done some of the penciling.



My last stop was a drug store. I cornered the pharmacist and flashed him my P.I. card.

Tell me what you can about Harry White. I tried a different tack. "Has he purchased any poison lately... any lethal drugs?"

KRISTEIN: Well, Heidi is a very wonderful artist, and maybe he deliberately created that effect. That was the story that caused the break between Gaines and myself. He started a new book, and, in a word, the ideological foundation of that book was that crime pays. And I received this story and was very shocked upon reading it, but I felt that as the artist I would simply employ my penicillin, which I had always employed; making certain changes that suited me. And in the last panel I did something that indicated that there was a moral reckoning insofar as the criminal was concerned. I don't mind cynicism, or realism, or extreme realism, but I do mind, very deeply, propagating the notion that immorality or crime is moral, or good. If you want to point out the existence of immorality, this has been the privilege of the greatest artists in

the world, and some of them have been at greater or lesser pains to point out that this is wrong. They may have been very realistic and brutal, but they never condoned it, and I certainly didn't propose to use whatever talents I had in support of this notion.

So I changed the panel and brought it in, and Feldstein read it very happily until he came to the last panel: "What's this, Bernie?" I said, "Well, I changed the story; I don't like the way you ended the story." And he said, "Well, we can't do that." And I said, "Well, neither can I; I can't do it this way." He said, "Well, if you don't do it, take it. You've got to do it this way; this is the new book." I said, "I can't do it and I won't do it, and I'm afraid this is it." And he called Bill Gaines and he told him, "Bernie doesn't want to do this," and I could hear Bill's excited voice over the phone, and Al said, "Well, Bill says you gotta do it," and I said, "Well, no." And that was it. So I let them know that I didn't want to be credited for it, and he had Crandall do the story and I never went back there, and that was the end between me and EC.

STEWART: That was about the time of the end of EC anyway.

KRISTEIN: I think they made a horrible, horrible mistake in doing that; just poor judgment, relying on the lowest common denominator for sales. My view has always been that good stuff is what sells, not bad stuff, and good stuff costs, and bad stuff won't. That they were very stupid at the time, and they just went to the lowest thing they could do.

STEWART: In other words, they thought they were certain to fail.

KRISTEIN: That was my impression. They were losing money and they wanted to do something very desperate, and they knew that all this shit, really, had been selling all this time, and they figured that they'd go back to it, and that the more vile the stuff is, the more money one makes.

STEWART: They ruined one important point, and that was that kids won't pay 25¢ for a magazine, and adults aren't interested in paying money for something that's not up to the quality of other stuff they can find in a magazine. So they had no audience for these things.

KRISTEIN: Well, I never figured it out just that way. I really had always been underestimating in the business aspect; figuring out these deals, smooth paper—25¢, and newspaper—1¢, you know. I really just wanted good stories. I felt that people would pay money for good stories. If you give them something fresh, something interesting, they'll go to great lengths to get these stories. Kids may not spend a quarter for a comic book, but they'll spend 75¢ for a movie.

STEWART: The first thing that became apparent in PictoFiction was that these were printed stories and they were not good stories.

KRISTEIN: Oh yes. I remember that aspect of it too. That was another stupid thing; it went very heavy on text and very small on pictures. In other words, their panic expressed itself in a foolish way. They again (I think Feldstein was the influence here) decided that what people wanted was more story and less pictures, which was the exact opposite of the truth. People wanted a good visualization, and they still do, and always will want an imaginative powerful pictorialization of ideas and stories. There's a hunger for it, and people go to the movies for it, and books are being widely illustrated because there's a deep hunger for it. And he did the exact opposite of what people are hungering for.

I think that reflects a very deep distrust of artists, really. And it's a very important sickness that the field will have to overcome; this profound distrust of the very person that is the reason for the existence of the field. The businessman distrusts the artist, but it's only the artist who creates the business for him. It's a very frightening thing and one of the important problems that an artist has to deal with. And it's this terrible

distrust that destroyed them.

STEWART: Do you think that PictoFiction, if it were done right, could be a creative medium?

KRISTEIN: Not only could be, but has been. I don't mean just in the past fifteen or thirty years, I mean for hundreds of years. There's nothing really new about it. The Chinese have done it. Rowlandson is a marvelous example of it. Another fine example is Gustave Doré's book about Russia, which was just issued in this country about five years ago. It really is nothing more than a comic book, because there are pictures and captions; and it's very witty, very satirical, but nonetheless, it's the same form as the comic book form. There have been very great artists and cartoonists who have worked in this medium. And medieval artists worked in continuous picture stories. The only thing challenging about it, and the only thing marvelous about it, is that it's a popular form. And it's a very contradictory notion, but that's where the whole problem lies—it's so popular. It's so popular it doesn't have artistic respect.

The odd thing about it is that people think that a visual medium, a visual art, is inferior to a literary art. I find that very odd—that a complex art such as a visual art, a picture, which is a very complex, a very complicated medium of expression and communication, should be regarded as being lower or on a lower scale than a literary art. And there's a terrible contradiction here, because you read the loftiest art criticism, which will go to very great lengths to explain how complex this form of communication is, and there it's speak to a literary person, he will tell you what a bastard form it is because it is visual—"Comics is a bastard form—it's stupid. Now

can it be good?"

STEWART: There are a lot of people in charge of the visual arts that don't really think...

KRISTEIN: In other words, a lot of people have power in the arts, have power to distribute art, or see what gets produced, who shouldn't have power.

BENSON: I'd like to ask how you got started in comics, and how you became interested in them as an art form.

KRISTEIN: Well, I had always looked at comics with contempt, but a friend of mine, who worked in the field, had repeatedly asked me to try drawing for it. Finally it did come about that I needed the money and I took a job, and then I was forced to examine closely the medium of comics. And in looking, I found that there were spectacular masters of drawing—Simon and Kirby... I found that comics was drawing, and it became the only serious field for me at that time. Then I went into the Army, and when I got out, I went back into comics the same day. And as far as the germinating of ideas and style and so forth goes, my time in comics was the most artistically productive, because of the drawing and composition. And by being in comics, I became no longer embarrassed about the so-called limitations of working in black and white and in a trench, and I shed all the criticisms of the form as I worked in it.

STEWART: A question related to John's; where did you study, and what did you do before you did comic books?

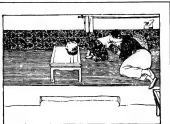
KRISTEIN: Well, that's the least interesting part of my artistic career. Where I studied is really very unimportant. The only time I was able to learn anything was when I actually worked at it. Which includes cinema. Comics was one of my



115. She went to the edge of the village and saw the cart disappearing rapidly in the distance. She stared ahead of her, overwhelmed with grief.

I've recently seen a book called *The People's Comic Book*, published by Doubleday Anchor, and there I could again see the possibilities of comics as a real art form. The breakdown is very straight, but the psychological perception is quite deep. They're using their own tremendous classic style, and they're absolutely uncompromising in the artistic quality. Of course, from a political point of view, the story content is quite silly in some of them. But some are very moving, and I don't put them down one bit.

The artists in that book used natural and spacious



116. It was dusk and the bell marking the end of the day's work was ringing. Shuangshuang went home and threw herself on the kang.

compositions, not tricked up with faded perspectives but expensively organized and designed. The pictures have a compositional subtlety which allows for a stronger effect on the reader. Their breakdown looks conventional and straight, but it's the psychological depth that counts.

Of course, the Chinese comic book artist suffers an obvious limitation of another kind. There's also a tradition of satire and farce in Chinese painting, and I doubt if an artist drawing on this tradition would get very far with the Chinese publishers.

most important schools.

STEWART: That's interesting, because every time I talk to an artist about his schooling, he says, "Oh well, I'm self-taught."

KRUGSTEIN: I think an important part of that, too, is that schools teach what's most accepted, and an artist is very rarely interested in what's accepted as good at the moment, because, first of all, it's usually a fraud; what happens to be accepted at the moment is nine times out of ten pure fraud and tripe. And it's what's not accepted, or what's unknown, or even what's despised that might be the precise answer for an individual artist. And one would very often have to do the very thing that brings ridicule and derision upon him in order to get what he wants; so that a real artist, I think, can only go one place to learn, and that's himself. . . . and work, that's all.

STEWART: In my article I think I talked about how your line quality would change to fit the type of story you were doing, as opposed to most other artists who always had the exact same stylistic surface no matter what context they were working in. For example, "The Flying Machine" was stylized, formal, "Pipe Dream" had a loose sketchy style, and so forth,

whereas other artists took their style as a given.

KRUGSTEIN: That's one of the extreme limitations of most comic book artists. In fact the demands of comic books and comic strips are very limiting for that, because they define a style. I always thought that there was no such thing as "a style"; that the idea of drawing was simply too big to be confined to a style. So naturally it always grieved me to think in terms of style, and I felt that all of art was open.

BENSON: On the other hand, there's no mistaking a Krugstein story when you're going through the EC's.

KRUGSTEIN: I was surprised to hear that, by the way. In fact, people used to call me a stylist, which I thought was a kind of idiotic connotation—"Oh, he's a stylist." But I never thought of style. I just thought of expressing that thought and feeling in the best way. But because I never felt that I had a style, I was surprised to hear from people that my work was very recognizable. But now, of course, I am aware that it is confined to a certain way.

BENSON: I liked the style you used for the *Hillman* comics very much.

KRUGSTEIN: Some of the stuff there was butchered in the

competition between artists, which drove down rates, and the cynical use of inferior artists, which also lowered rates and at the same time demonstrated that from a commercial point of view superior art is unnecessary!

I was opposed to an exclusive "guild" which would have a closed membership. Instead, I felt that publishers should be free to hire whomever they wished, provided they adhered to an established minimum rate. I thought such a minimum would remove the incentive for a publisher to use inferior work, since, if he had to pay well anyhow, he would naturally prefer good work.

The sentiment among the less established artists seemed to be in favor of a union. The better known people were generally opposed to the idea. It was also the leading artists who most ridiculed the notion of us as illustrators.

Our meetings grew larger and more emotional. Some of the more important artists came to the meetings; people from DC, EC and Timely. We gathered sufficient impetus for the publishers to begin taking serious notice of us. Because of pressure from some people who didn't want to antagonize their publishers, editors were invited to speak at the meetings. At one memorable meeting, Bob Kaigher addressed our large group and delivered a diatribe on our ignorance and arrogance in assuming the title of illustrator. In a verbal assault he stacked the idea that we might be anything more than commercial craftsmen producing a product on demand. Interestingly, a member of the Executive Committee of SOCBII became acquainted with Kaigher at that time, lost interest in the organization, and thereafter began doing free-lance work for DC.

Our meetings remained torn by the conflict: union or professional society? The Executive Committee generally was not inspired to move in the direction of a mere professional society. The "established" artists in the field were unsympathetic to a union. So our organization eventually collapsed.

Although I had done work for DC, I no longer received work from them. But even while I was president of SOCBII, and my views were known, Bill Gaines took me on his staff at his usual terms, which were, at that time, generally among the highest in the field.

inking until I got to ink it myself. There was a story called "The Fly," which was a beautiful story for me at that time, as I recall it, and the inker absolutely destroyed it. When that happened I began badmouthing Ed Cronin, the editor, to let me ink my own stuff. And then I began maturing further, because his stories were good, and I was able to complete them in a style that I liked.

You see, that's another aspect of the limitation of the field. That little struggle is another reflection of the dreadful limitations of the field, which exist not only in this field, but in many commercial fields. It was assumed that a penciller could give his work to an inker, and violence would not be done to the story, because inkers were professionally good and pencils were professionally good. The concept of artistic identity did not exist in his head. So I really had to battle the

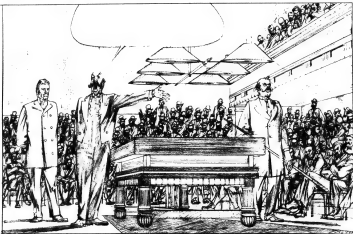
guy. Because of his economic set up in his office, it was more convenient for him to have an inker take my work, and I had to break down a convention there. And I assume that these kinds of limitations and straight jackets still exist in the field.

But all things considered, I liked what I did at Hillman. And Cronin was a very interesting editor, extremely interesting.

BENSON: What did you do before Hillman?

KRUGSTEIN: After the war I worked for a man named Bernie Italy, who was an agent. He had a group of officers, I think on West 44th Street, and I had a desk there. There was another man who had a desk there named Charlie Voight, an old, great, marvelous cartoonist. He was a master, far ahead of his time.

This story here, "The Treasure Keeper," was done in that shop; the first story I did when I got out of the army. And to



I don't remember just when I decided to do something to help establish an organization in the comic field for the purpose of setting minimum standards of pay rates. It was sometime between the time I worked for Ziff-Davis (in good times), did some work for Timely and DC (the slide into bad times), and the time that Bill Gaines took me onto the staff of EC. I remember that the Society of Comic Book Illustrators (SOCBII) was functioning while I did some free-lance work for Stan Lee, because I used to deliver jobs to the Timely factory carrying a sign advertising the meetings.

I spent days telephoning scores of artists, discussing the need for some sort of organization. I talked to as many as I could, from the top names in the field to the average journeyman workers who did the major proportion of the work.

The early meetings were fairly well attended and lively. I was elected president. There were many other who did yeoman work for SOCBII, but perhaps I shouldn't mention the names of people still working in comics. Harry Harrison, then an artist and writer in the field and now a well known science fiction writer, was very active.

The first crisis was over the choice of a name. I took the position that comics was a great art, that we were in fact free artists and fine illustrators, I felt that it was vital that we should understand our own unique talents, that we should value our work. "Comic book artist" was the common descriptive term for our work—and seriously this meant that we were not artists. An illustrator was thought to be someone functioning in a superior sphere, above the comic book "artist." I refused to challenge the accepted image and therefore I argued for the name Society of Comic Book Illustrators. Paradoxically, by using the term illustrators it designated us as artists. My view was accepted after much argument.

The next crisis was the debate over the question of what kind of organization we should be: a society like the Society of Illustrators—more or less a restricted group with an aim of exclusiveness and seeking cooperative and fraternal relations with the publishers—or a union capable of enforcing minimum rates of pay, through strike action if necessary. My policy was that only by maintaining a decent minimum pay rate could we resist the destructive





"The Incredible Hulk" © 1956 by 20th Century Comics Corp.



"The Revolution of the Four" © 1956 by 20th Century Comics Corp.



"Someone is Calling" © 1956 by 20th Century Comics Corp.



"The Revolution of the Four" © 1956 by 20th Century Comics Corp.

to come down and meet Bill Gaines, and I did. Harvey was there, Bill was there, and so was Al Feldstein. And that was the beginning of my association with Bill Gaines, although I didn't do anything for Harvey at that time, oddly enough. I started working for the other books.

BENSON: What about the stories that you did for *Atlas* after *EC*, where you did the stories with hundreds of panels?

KRIGSTEIN: Those were the last things that I did. I thought the plots that Stan Lee was using at the time weren't that bad, but their treatment was very bad. As far as possible I tried to transcend that written treatment to bring out the idea behind the story, and to give them a lighter touch.

I was really writing messages and sending them to sea in a bottle, those. Those stories were my attempt at carrying out an object lesson of how comic stories could be broken down. I used them as a medium for dramatizing the breakdown technique, to show the limitless ways that a comic story could be unfolded. I wanted to show that the form was fluid and dynamic and should not be considered a static form.

BENSON: It seems you did them very fast.

KRIGSTEIN: Yes. I spent proportionally more time on the breakdown than on the art.

BENSON: A vertical splash panel on the right seemed to be a hallmark of those stories.

KRIGSTEIN: I never liked the idea of the splash panel as a storytelling device. They serve no artistic purpose or dramatic use. There's no reason a story can't start right out with the opening situation, instead of having a big panel first.

BENSON: There were a number of your *EC* stories where the first page had six panels or so and no splash panel, which was very unusual for *EC*. How did that come about? Did you discuss it with Feldstein?

KRIGSTEIN: I don't remember discussing it with

my utter astonishment, Bernie Bailey told me that Voight had praised it very much when he saw it. And I hadn't thought it had any quality, you know. But I enjoyed doing that dumb story very much.

Then between 1946 and 1949 I did an enormous amount of work for Fawcett Comics, handling two books: *Nyoko* and *Golden Arrow*. If my memory is accurate, these were 82 page books appearing monthly. And although some of the stories were done by another artist whose name I don't know, I believe I handled the chore almost single handed, including the cover. I never signed them; they were back work of the purest distillation. But they were fun, and helped me learn my trade.

I also did some work for Timely Comics, and then I worked for Rae Herman. I forgot the names of the books they put out. The reason I kept changing around at that time is that I was searching for better rates.

After I left Rae Herman I had a studio on 42nd Street between 6th and 7th Avenues that I shared with several other comic book artists. I was then working for Hillman and a few other publishers. And I received a call from somebody named Harvey Kurtzman; and he asked me if I would like to work for him. Now, I had heard of *EC*, but I didn't know much about them. I knew that Kurtzman was doing interesting work, and that the people with him were doing interesting things, but I felt that the rates that he was able to pay didn't satisfy me; they weren't good enough. I was getting better rates at Hillman, and at Ziff-Davis too. And the work I was doing was very interesting to me at that time. I had what I thought was a reasonable amount of freedom. So I turned Harvey down.

However, I soon became rather turned off with the people I was working for, so I called Harvey up. This was about a year or two later. I asked him if his offer was still good. He told me

HERE'S A CRAZY, MIXED-UP  
FRIGHTMARE I CALL . . .



"MURDER DREAM" © 1956 by 20th Century Comics Corp.

Feldstein. My recollection is that I simply did it as part of introducing more panels to expand the action. I found it was easiest to do it on page one, because I felt the splash panel was unnecessary. It was a kind of a cliché thing that people were adhering to unnecessarily.

BENSON: But how could you have rearranged the stories without cutting them up completely and rekeying them out?

KRIGSTEIN: I don't really recall. Maybe I was given some scripts before the lettering was done. I would have to look at those stories again, and also check out the dates. [He checks through the stories.]

First of all, in "Salvage," I divided up the splash panel myself, so we can dispense with that one. That has nothing to do with it. The same thing with "Marbles." And obviously I was given all the stories prelettered.

"Monotony" is the earliest one to come out with a six panel first page, April-May 1964. That's intriguing. Feldstein must have pre-lettered it for me that way. Now, "Master Race" was published March-April 1965, but they held it for about ten months, for an inordinate length of time. Every single one of these other stories must have been laid out while "Master Race" was in the office. They were pre-lettered that way by Feldstein; that's obvious. But they were all done after "Master Race."

The only question I have is about "Monotony." If Feldstein gave me that story before I did "Master Race," then he must take the credit. Because the first page of "Monotony" was an inspiration, although the rest of the story was sheer idiosyncrasy. I don't know if my attitude toward it shows up very obviously in the art. But I felt that the first page was a very artistic coup.

I have the records here somewhere as to when I actually did the stories. [He checks his records.] "Monotony" was done October 1963, "The Catacombs" was February 1964, and "Master Race" was March 1964. So there you have it. I'd be interested to know whether my mind took off because of "Monotony." It might have. I don't know. Of course, Feldstein was undoubtedly using it as a device to condense the story into fewer panels, not to expand the action of the story.

BENSON: Did Stan Lee have anything to do with the multiple panels in your stories at Atlas?

KRIGSTEIN: No, quite the opposite. In fact, there was one time when I handed in one of those stories where I had multiplied panels. And later I received a call from his funky and was told that Stan wanted to consolidate some of the

## JUST HER SPEED

TO KNOW AN ARTIST WITHOUT UNDERSTANDING HIS WORK IS TO KNOW A MAN WITHOUT KNOWING HIS MIND. THIS IS THE CASE WITH STAN LEE. HE IS A MAN WHO HAS BEEN KNOWN FOR HIS WRITING SINCE HE WAS A BOY. HE HAS BEEN KNOWN FOR HIS WRITING SINCE HE WAS A BOY. HE HAS BEEN KNOWN FOR HIS WRITING SINCE HE WAS A BOY.



TO KNOW AN ARTIST WITHOUT UNDERSTANDING HIS WORK IS TO KNOW A MAN WITHOUT KNOWING HIS MIND. THIS IS THE CASE WITH STAN LEE. HE IS A MAN WHO HAS BEEN KNOWN FOR HIS WRITING SINCE HE WAS A BOY. HE HAS BEEN KNOWN FOR HIS WRITING SINCE HE WAS A BOY.



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panels, and add dialogue to those panoramic panels that I had inserted. I refused to give him permission to do so. I was told that Stan had bought the work, and since he "owned" it he could do whatever he wished with it. My answer was that if any changes were made I would sue. I gave him the option of returning the work, and I think I may have been stupid enough to offer to return the money. In any case the story was published unchanged.

BENSON: I guess you know that Stan Lee has been the



upstream of the so-called current revitalization of comics.

KRIGSTEIN: I'm delighted to learn that. Twenty years of unrelenting editorial effort to encourage miserable taste and to flood the field with degraded imitations and non-stories have certainly qualified him for that respected position.

BENSON: He uses a new method of having the artist help plot the story, and lay out the whole story using the pictures and sequencing the words, and then the dialogue is added between the penciling and the inking.

KRIGSTEIN: That's a remarkably prophetic artistic method—prophesy projected backwards, that is, to the beginnings of comics. This was the method they used in the beginning, when the form was so primitive that the mere existence of pictorial movement was sufficient to win the reader's interest, and the dialogue could be so elementary that it didn't interfere with the action of the chase. Shades of the earliest movies! In other words, the aesthetic of comics as

'action' of the most infantile kind is still with us. My futile idea was that action in comics, as in any art, doesn't end with one person pounding another person in the jaw. There's also the action of emotion, psychology, character and idea.

BENSON: Do you still read any comics?

KRIGSTEIN: No. What you say about the increasing interest in comics seems to coincide with a decrease on my part. I'm afraid I've lost interest in doing anything in the comics form. Right now I'm too involved in painting. I'm glad I did what I did in comics, but as for doing anything new, I don't think so.

BENSON: I'll bet the popularity of the Pop Art painters really gets under your skin.

KRIGSTEIN: Pop Art has made visible an underground interest among intellectuals in the going popular arts as an important social phenomenon. Despite all the public protestation of the Pop Artists, there is an inherent criticism in

## U-BOAT REVENGE KNOW NOTHING





their art. Some artists criticize by emphasizing the ludicrous in their object of criticism, that is to say, total acceptance and identification with what is vile. The uglier, stupider and more boast the source, the more useful it is as a subject of Pop Art. For the new comic fans, the worse the comics, the more titillating the pleasure, the more campy it is. Of course, among the so called Pop Artists there are those that are more aggressively critical. The sculptor Segal is an example. The more overt the criticism, the more I like it.

Obviously, my approach was quite different. I was attracted to the possibility of using a popular form in an effort to cast it into classic proportions. The idea of attempting to harmonize popularity with monumentality has always attracted me.

STEWART: Why is it that you never wrote a script for EC?

KRIGSTEIN: No. I didn't. I was so busy exploring the artistic end of it that I was never interested in exploring any other avenue at the time. I only wrote that script I showed you because I wanted to illustrate a particular kind of story, and you might say it was merely out of desperation that I turned upon myself as a source.

But one has to realize that it is not necessarily true that the best work is produced by an artist-writer, any more than it is true that the best operas are produced by the best composer-writers. The analogy between comics and another art to me is just as frequent with opera as it is with movies. It's a pertinent analogy because a comic story is a composition that is visual and extremely musical. Because of the rhythmic content of it, the element of timing is profoundly important. That's what, to me, brings comics very close to opera. Now there have been composers who wrote their own lyrics, like Wagner. But Wagner wasn't necessarily the greatest opera writer.

But even with movies, a director can be a writer, but great movies are not necessarily produced by director-writers. Many are produced by directors that have other texts that they are

working with. If we limited ourselves to that aesthetic, we would then have to dismiss all of the great directors who didn't write.

There's another aspect of it. When an artist-writer combination exists, he writes for his own weaknesses as well as his own strengths. So that he can very carefully organize the totality to take account of his weaknesses. This doesn't have to fit into the scheme of a person who just writes or who just draws.

Which is not to say that an artist-writer couldn't create something just as important as an artist and a writer could. There's no innate superiority either way.

BENSON: But it seems to me that sometimes you are inhibited in doing what you wanted to do because of the writers you were working with. Didn't you feel any kind of a need to work in closer collaboration with the writers than you did?

KRIGSTEIN: No. My feeling was that good stories were available. Very fine stories were easily available.

BENSON: You mean that you were getting good stories?

KRIGSTEIN: No. I mean that if somebody wanted good stories, there would be good stories in plenty. That would not be a problem if they were wanted. That's why I never felt that it was necessary for me to write the kind of stories that I wanted.

BENSON: But very often comic writers were not aware of the problems an artist might have. For example, the story might have excessive dialogue, with nothing happening.

KRIGSTEIN: No. That was not a problem, because that could be manipulated. I remember that when I worked for Cronin, he was getting very fine stories, and they were not written perfectly for the artist, but I could still manipulate the panels. And I remember rewriting panels, and it was permissible, it was very acceptable. So therefore I never felt chained.

BENSON: So when you had the freedom to rework it, that

The ideology of commercial comics is to rationalize the cliché as being spontaneous, and to brand deeply felt "high art"/romanticism art, for example as being "intellectual."

But spontaneity is expressed unhampered by technique; it is natural and unfettered and happens where mastery has been achieved. The great Oriental masters of the brush found spontaneity only after many years of observation and rigorous study. Merely because spontaneous material and hack work are both quickly done does not mean that the two can be equated.

There is a school of comic book criticism that conceives of comics as the repository of all the rejected values of "fine" art, and sees merit in that status. And it is true that in being a literary form, comics fills the gap left by modernist art with its emphasis away from subject matter, and fulfills the values abandoned by non-literary abstract art. It nevertheless has available to it all the tradition and culture of hundreds of years of literal story-telling art. It is this tradition which bears the possibility of real feeling, in contrast to the hackneyed clichés that comics are filled with. In rejecting the abstract, there is no need for comics to embrace the cliché.

unintuitive to me. There's something about his work that looked like kind of original charm as a cartoonist, even.

I feel that the Eisner style of breakdown is good, but it has important limitations. And the same is true of Kurtzman. They look bright and clever, and they're different, they're far more interesting than a conventional comic story in many ways, and they can do more, they can do far more.

But, despite that, they are still limited. They do not go deeply enough into the psychological feeling of the story. I haven't seen their work for years. But my reaction was that they were clever and bright, but superficial, and I always had ambitions for comics to scramble out of that superficiality.

Now in regard to Kurtzman's visual style... I think he was trying for different effects than I was. I didn't want a picture version of time, where the camera is going closer, where Kurtzman repeated panels, each closer to an object. That is not comics and that is not pictures, because pictures do not relate to one another in that way. I wanted each panel to be a separate picture, and I didn't want the repeating panels to bleed together like a film. Because you're not looking at a motion picture. Comics are not a motion picture. They're closer to a single painting than they are to a motion picture.

BENSON: Isn't the whole page a unit of time?

KRISTEIN: Kurtzman's pages, like Simon and Kirby's pages are not really composed separately. They are total in another way. Now they are great; now Simon and Kirby is great. But I am not thinking of composing a page that way. If you take apart a Kurtzman page or an Eisner page and look at a single panel, the single panel fails. It can only exist as a total page. The Eisner panel as an individual panel cannot exist by itself without its surrounding page. It exists only as a page because they exist in time like a movie. They are held together by a sequence of actions.

The panel has to exist by itself, otherwise the integrity of the art is in jeopardy. Until the artist arrives at the point where he realizes that by drawing a single panel he has a single work of art that exists by itself as a single statement which can live by itself, only then can all the panels live together. And then you reach a totality that is completely out of the realm of the infinite kind of page contrivances that comics are filled with.

Each panel must exist by itself. And the thing that makes a comic page different from every other day in the year is that each of those individual works of art, at the same time as they have a totally individual life of their own, also exist as a total group, as a unit. This was my inspiring motivation in doing comics. If you can pull out your panel and frame it, exhibit it as a panel, and then have the reader unconscious of that as he's reading the totality, then you've done something in my estimation. You've raised comic book art to the level of Goya, if you can achieve that.



## THE RED BADGE OF COURAGE

HENRY FLEMING HAS DESCRIBED HIS UNIT, AND, AFTER WAKING UP IN THE DARK, REMINDS IT HE HAS WITNESSED THE DEATH OF HIS COMRADE JIM CONKLIN, WHO HAS ADDED TO HIS GUILTY BURDEN WITH "THE SCENE" IN THE FORMER, LONELY AND DREADFUL SILENCE, NOW CHANGING. HENRY'S BLOODY HEAD WOUND IS ACTUALLY THE RESULT OF A BLOW FROM THE RIFLE OF A FELLOW YANK. THIS BREAKDOWN COVERS P. 149 (the 149, modern LIBRARY EDITION.

WE SHOULD CONTRAST THIS WITH THE FIRST...



OF A SOLDIER WHO WAKES UP IN THE DARK AND MUST FIND A FIGURE...



HEAVY YOU HENRY? YES IT IS - IT'S ME



light - inside

When broken up

WILSON, I DON'T - 84 CONSIDER IN GRASPING THE



WILSON, CONTRASTED TO

IVE BEEN AN AWK OFF CASE IN THE RIGHT TUB BIG



HENRY, ANIMATEDLY.

I GOT SHOT FROM THE REGIMENT OVER IN THE FRONT, I GOT SHOT IN THE



HENRY, PUTS HAND TO HEAD

WILSON, SYMPATHETIC



SERGEANT CARPENTER HENRY WILLOW (SEPARATED) WILLOW HENRY BROTHER WILLOW (WAS ON AN -) HENRY (WAS AWAY IN -) CARPENTER



HENRY

HENRY AND CARPENTER SPRAWLED OVER GROUND MANY FIGURES IN FOREST

(SWEATED, FILTHY, BEARDED) FACES.



(SWEAT)

(SWEAT)

WILLOW, WITH CAUTION

HENRY (WAS IN THE)

WILLOW

HENRY (WAS IN THE)



WILLOW

WILLOW SPREADS BLANKET OVER REMAINS HENRY

HENRY

WILLOW, BACK TURNED

PARA CAPTION

AFTER THE REPT THE YOUTH SAID NO MORE. AN EXCLUSIVE DEWILLOW HAD SPREAD THROUGH HIM. THE WARM GROUND OF THE BLANKET DEWILLOW HIM, THE ALSO A GENTLE DEWILLOW. HIS HAND FEEL FORWARD ON HIS CRACKED PATE AND HIS WEIGHTED LIPS WENT TOWNY DOWN OVER HIS EYES.

# RETURN IV

THE DISTANCE WAS SHATTERING AND BLANKING WITH THE HOPE OF FIGHTING.



HENRY, THE MORNING SUN

HIS EYES SPREAD OVER THE MASS OF DEAD PRICK SPREADING UPON THE GROUND, PAID, AND IN STRANGE POSTURES.



HE STARTED UP WITH A LITTLE CRY, HIS DISORDERED MIND LUMPING THE HALL OF THE FARTS AS A CHANGING PLACE.

HENRY, LOOKING UPON THE WRECKED SPRAWLED SLEEPERS. RISING SUN.

SURELY THERE WAS A HUNDRED FATHOMS OF TUNNELS. A DISTANT BUZZLE SAW A FAMILY.



HENRY, RISING

SLAMING WOUNDS CAME FROM ABOVE AND FIVE FIVE THE FORT. THE DUGLES CALLED TO EACH OTHER, LEE TOWNSON SAID GIBBS.



BACKGROUND - WILSON CAMP  
FOREGROUND - HENRY, SELF, PITTING

WELL, WELL, COME NOW YOU GOT SOME NEWS, THEN MAYBE YOU'LL FEEL BETTER.



AT THE FIFTHSIDE, THE SOLDIER WATCHED OVER HIS CAMPING, WANTS WITH TOWNSON'S AND CARL.

WILSON PREPARED

# RETURN V

THE NIGHT TIME WENT UP A REMOVED CRASHES IN HIS GEAR. HE WAS AN ALIVE A LONE JONES SOLDIER.



WILSON RAISED LATTER FROM A SMILE AND SOUTY TIN PAUL.

JIM CARLIN'S DEAD



HENRY

WHAT? IS HE? JIM CARLIN?



WILSON

YES, HE'S DEAD. SHOT IN THE SIDE.



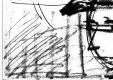
HENRY

WELL, DON'T SAY SA. JIM CARLIN - PURE CUSSES...



WILSON

THE NIGHTMARE LOST THEIR HAIR. THE MEN, YESTERDAY, I THOUGHT A GUNNER THEY WAS ALL DEAD, BUT, LATE, THEY CAME A CORN. DARK LATE NIGHT WITH A SEREN, AFTER ALL, WE DIDN'T LOSE BUT A FEW.



WILSON

THEY WERE SCATTERED ALL OVER, WILSON'S TOWN. THE WOUNDS, FIGHTING WITH TOWNSON'S AND EVERYTHING, JUST LIKE YOU TOWN.



WILSON, GENTLY  
HENRY

# THE ASSAULT I

(from p 206  
Modern Library Edition)

THE YOUTH STARED AT THE  
LAND IN FRONT OF HIM.  
ITS FOLIAGE AND SOFTNESS TO  
VIBRANT COLORS AND SOUNDS.



HE WAS UNWARE OF THE MARCHING OF SOLDIERS THAT  
STARTED THE CHARGE.



SUDDENLY HE FELT A HEAVING AND STRAINING  
AMONG THE MEN.

(NEW STRUGGLE TO RISE)



THE YOUTH WAS FUSED  
AND INTENSE.

HE LUNGED FORWARD AND  
BEGAN TO RUN.

THE LINE FELL SLOWLY FORWARD LIKE A TAPPLING WALL, AND, WITH A  
LOW, LINGERING GASP THAT WAS INTERPRETED FOR A CHORUS, THE RANGING TROOP BEGAN ITS JOURNEY.

(MASSIVE PART OF TRANCE-LIKE CHARGE)

# THE ASSAULT II

He fixed his eye upon  
a distant column of  
troops.



HE RAN TOWARD IT AS  
A GOAL.



ENTERING CAMP: THE DEAD AND THREATS BEFORE  
IT AWAKENED

# THE ASSAULT

III

OH! CAP?

THE FOREST HAD TERRIFIC SOUND



CHOICE REMAINS FROM THERE TWO FIGURES OF APPROACHING ROBOT



EXPLOSION SOUND

MAN, SURROUND BY BRONTS, BELL IN GATES AND ASSAULT



IT SEEMED TO THE YOUNG THAT HE SAW EVERYTHING



THE NEW MAN, WORKING AT A BARBER, WERE PLANT TO HIM



PROBABLE SCENE, ROBOT SUMMER - "SMOOG"



ROBOT YOUTH

THE BROWN OR GRAY TRUNKS OF THE TREES SHOWED SOME ROUGHNESS OF THEIR SURFACE



FOREST, SMOOG FROM ROBOT RIFLES

# THE ASSAULT

IV



ROBOT YOUTH

THE NEW MAN, STARTING BY THE AND SWEATING FACE... RUNNING HARDY...



ROBOT (CLANG) FALLEN FIGURE OF RECKLESS PANEL



THERE WAS A POWER MADE FROM THE FURIOUS TON. THE NEW, PITCHED FORWARD AND SAW HIM, DIVER INTO CHAIRS, HUGGING AND MARGARIT



IT MADE A MASS ENTHUSIASM THAT, IT SEEMED, COULDN'T BE SHOWN BY GRANITE OR BRASS



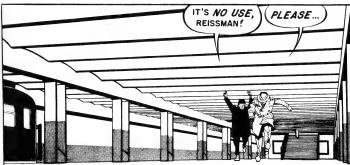
ROBOT YOUTH

AS HAD ONE A MEMORIAL BUT FROM IMPRESSION SO THAT APPROACH, FISHING WAS PICTURED AND RETURNED TO HIM SAFE WHY HE HIMSELF WAS THERE





## AN EXAMINATION OF "MASTER RACE"



by John Benson, David Kasakove and Art Spiegelman

Bernard Krigitz's "Master Race" is one of the finest stories ever to appear in the comics form. It is a comic book rarity; a story with such density and breadth of technique that it merits a detailed and exhaustive examination on the part of the reader. Partly because of the nature of the industry most comic book stories, even the good ones, contain nothing beyond that which is immediately apparent to the casual reader, but "Master Race" has layers of meaning and detail both in its form and visual content which will yield the alert reader new enjoyment beyond the immediately apparent with each rereading. What follows is not a definitive analysis, but merely the results of one such examination.

Although this article confines its attention to the art, one must bear in mind that the text of "Master Race" was written as it was printed before the artist ever saw it. No one at this date can recall who wrote the original script, but editor Albert Feldstein did enough reworking for his style to be apparent.

It is a powerful narrative, using the most dramatic events of this century as a backdrop for the brief confrontation of two antagonists. Obviously it was the basic narrative that inspired the artist to make this story the classic that it is. But it is just as obvious that it is the artist's contribution that lifts the story out of the context of the twist ending comic book story and makes it a memorable artistic experience.

In fact, much of the power that Krigitz brings to the story is due to his choice of a style which is the antithesis of standard comic storytelling. Instead of employing the exaggerated visual comic book phrases usually used to clearly denote action and emotion (speed lines, large beads of sweat, etc.), Krigitz uses a much more objective standard of delineation. Instead of frequent close-ups, an often used technique to get "close" to a character's feelings, Krigitz keeps a physical distance from the characters. Instead of using "dramatic" motion picture type lighting effects, Krigitz uses patterns of dark and light in much more abstract ways. Instead of a barbarizing use of free shapes, Krigitz concentrates on

using sharp angles and straight lines wherever possible.

Finally, in opposition to the cartoonist's approach, there is the chilling, aloof, precise, clean rendering which is used throughout the story. In this contrast between the apparently detached style and the extreme emotional content of the story lies the strength of Krigitz's interpretation. The distancing allows a perspective that illuminates the events and forces a deeper, more introspective analysis.

The story is composed of three well defined sections; an initial confrontation, a long flashback, and the denouement. The first section sets the mood of the story; the depiction of routine city life is coupled with a developing sense of unease.

Page 1 appears simple enough; six panels of equal width show a man purchasing a subway token and waiting on the platform. The panel symmetry reminds one of the opening page of Krigitz's earlier story "Monotony," in which he used the design to satirize the story's title. On a closer look within the panels, however, great differences between the two stories emerge. Though the page structure in both cases denotes order, the "Monotony" panels have a light, airy atmosphere, with simple compositions, while the "Master Race" panels are dark and forboding, and are infinitely more complex.

In panel 1 the protagonist Reissman is seen from beneath, making his descent from light into the blackness that dominates the panel. The subway locale is an important element of the story, and both the angle and the dominant black are the first signals of Krigitz's vision of the subway as a dramatic event.

Although the change attendant is the one in a cage, it is Reissman who is seen behind bars and wire in panel 2, his eyes shrouded in shadow, in contrast to the innocently lit attendant. His cold expression is inked with thick blacks, not the more delicate rendering used for the attendant. In panel 3, Reissman's face is still deep in shadow although one can see the full faces of the strangers around him. The composition frames Reissman against a bank of bars with a heavy black

man hanging over his head. Such compositional touches reinforce the text's description of Reisman as a man haunted by memories of horror.

In panel 4, the rails sweep ahead of the train in a powerful three-dimensional arc, shattering the calm vertical and horizontal composition just as the scream of the wheels "shatters the silence."<sup>1</sup> As Reisman has entered the story alone in the first panel, so the train, an important entity in the story, enters alone in the panel below. In panel 5 the viewpoint shifts to include the platform, so that Reisman and the train are now in confrontation.

It is worthwhile noting the differences between panels 4 and 5. In panel 4 both the track and ceiling are curved, a sense of depth is achieved through a careful use of dark shadows, and the side pillars are realistically depicted. While there is some feeling of depth in panel 5, it is composed of straight lines, no blacks, and almost abstract patterns on the wall to the right. There is a feeling of compression in panel 5 due to the fact that the principal perspective line, the edge of the platform, is absolutely vertical. Both panels create a sense of depth, although the methods used are quite different. In panel 4 the reader's eyes are led into the panel, whereas in panel 5, one's eyes are led outside the panel, the forward motion of the train increasing to go beyond the surface of the page.

The two panels are separate pictorial entities, and although they create a strong dual staccato punch, it is caused by an interrelationship that is wholly different and more complex than the standard comic "cinematic" device of repeating an identical scene for two panels, with an object or person moving closer in the second panel.

Krigstein makes a sudden switch from the depiction of depth in panels 4 and 5 to total two-dimensionality in panel 6, wonderfully reconstructing the actual shock a person gets when he views a train approach and subsequently pass directly in front of him.

Though not immediately apparent, the relationship of panel 6 to panel 5 completes the relationship of panel 5 to panel 4. In these three panels Krigstein achieves the geometric ratio of the increase in size of the central train (the ratio of the window sizes is 2:5:10). Many artists, though composing the panels differently, might use this geometric increase in size. The interesting element here is that Krigstein has used the same geometric ratio for the sensation of depth—going from a three-dimensional depiction of depth to a slightly more compressed image, to an absolutely flat two-dimensional composition.<sup>2</sup>

The flatness in panel 6 is intensified by the multiple—"urrealist"—images of the passengers. These multiple images simultaneously serve several other purposes. First, they very successfully reproduce the synchoscopic effect a person gets when standing close to a moving train. Second, having used the device on page one, he is able effortlessly to indicate the dovetail of the train in the next panel (page 2, panel 1) by showing only two multiple images. This also creates a strong bridge between the burning of the train in the page. Finally, its distinctive quality is such that the use of the same technique on the last page of the story creates a strong coda. So the multiple images are not merely a flashy device,

# MASTER RACE



but Reisman actually sees as well as being a comment on his thoughts. The most is made of a compromised situation.<sup>3</sup>

The text for panel 7 describes Reisman studying the faces of his fellow passengers, something a man living in fear would be unlikely to do. Krigstein solves this inconsistency in characterization by showing Reisman surreptitiously looking at their reflections from behind his upturned collar. Reisman is walked in by fate, in reflection to his right, in life to his left, trapped as he was by the panel border in panel 3.

The first panel in the last tier, panel 8, is the symmetrical opposite of the previous panel. Due to the switch in viewpoint, we now see the people whose reflections were previously in the window; the man in the cap, the woman in the turban.

From panel 8 to panel 9 there is a switch from an objective to a subjective viewpoint, one of the two clearly subjective panels in the story. One knows that the man getting on is important because he is seen through Reisman's eyes. The single line of text similarly isolates the event.

There are other shocks to the eye which establish the importance of panel 9. There is an element of depth between the close view of Reisman and the retreating passengers in the

background in panel 8 that sharply contrasts with the single plane of panel 9. This change is reinforced by the contrast of the delineation of roundness of the exiting passenger's coat with the solid flat black of the new passenger. Finally there is the very important contrast between the clutter and sketchiness of panel 8 to the simple austerity of panel 9.

The man who enters is dressed in black, with a face like a skull; the symbol of death. He is framed in a Mordorian-like abstraction of Perfect Order, the certitude oftribution that is soon to fall upon Reisman.

Reisman's reaction to the new passenger, panel 10, is emphasized with the story's first and precisely only close-up. His torn-laden eyes are further dramatically spaced between his hat and the newspaper. The exaggerated whites of his eyes, framed with black, heightens the drama and contrast with the narrow slit Reisman had previously used to survey the other passengers.

This is the dramatic moment, Krigstein draws back. The caption of panel 1 on page 3 describes Reisman's mouth twitching, his hands opening and closing, wet with perspiration, yet we are shown only his back unobtrusively placed in the corner of a panoramic longshot. This is not to be the moment of confrontation. Instead, Krigstein establishes the antagonism in their locale, separates them on the opposite sides of a neatly empty subway car, separated by a lone uninvolved passenger who, bored or asleep, is unaware of their private drama. Reisman and the Man are linked in heavy blacks, unlike the antipathetically rendered subway car around them. Krigstein's subway car, sterile, stark, not the familiar well-worn garbage-strewn vehicle that we feel comfortable in.<sup>4</sup>

After thus setting the stage, the story embarks on a three page flashback, with panel 3 serving as the connecting device. Whereas the first section of "Master Race" achieves its suspense through a use of the physical qualities of the art (spatial relationships, the opposition of black and white, flatness and depth, etc.), the second section uses clear-cut visual symbols and metaphors to make unmistakable political and moral statements. In addition, the flashback section is generally superior to the first section in that it is more important placed on continuity. Each panel provides a separate piece of historical information.

Perhaps it is a flaw of the twist-ended plot that this section does not deal directly with the characters. Krigstein has sensed upon this experience to drive home the universal nature of the conflicts in the story.

It is in this section that Krigstein's cold aloof rendering is most apparent. Here is where long shots are most often used. The horrors described are consistently underplayed in the pictures. The distancing only serves to accentuate and heighten the horror of the events that transpired during the Nazi reign.

In the final panel of the flashback, panel 3 on page 5, Krigstein uses a long shot which emphasizes the crowd's roar echoing the roar of the train, rather than, as the text does, tying Hitler's voice to the scream of the wheels. The long shot of the gigantic rally is a much better image to begin the flashback with than Hitler's face as described in the text. It forcefully establishes the whole sweep of a period of history. Using the blocks of uniform crowds and the angular lines of the podium, Krigstein captures the motif of power and



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1. Krigstein's comment: I'm glad you've mentioned sound, because to me the whole first section is a strong sound effect. I was very conscious of the sound of the train coming in. Creating a rhythm, both within the picture and the rhythm relating one picture to another, was an extremely important element in designing pictures for the specific story.

2. Krigstein's comment: I do remember the sensation of impression in panel 5—the crucial transitional unit in a series of three. I didn't think of the design as flattening out (which it does), but felt the place coming up to the camera from the deep interior in an accumulating rack, and resolved in panel three. But your analysis is also quite correct.



maneuvers used in the Nazi rallies. The "Seg Heil" is not enclosed in a standard bellion, but floats over the crowd as a generalized roar.

In panel 4 Kristein reverses the process, showing a close-up of glassy-eyed faces when the text speaks of "multitudes." He has thus added as element not present in the text, rather than merely illustrating it.

In panel 5, the figures, dwarfed by the towering fascist icons, move stiffly as though hypnotized. The blowing paper proclaims "Work makes life sweet," a phrase which was inscribed over the entrance of Auschwitz and other concentration camps.

Panel 6, one of the panels created by Kristein's expansion of the story, isolates Reisman from the rest of the crowd. Once again, Reisman is in shadow. Panel 7 compositionally echoes panel 5, both show a group of advancing figures seen from a low angle. The civilians have been transformed into Hitler's Gestapo. When separated by the lone figure of Reisman, the three panels together also hint at Reisman's own transition from a member of the crowd to a Nazi.<sup>5</sup>

The three panels at the top of page 4 form a remarkable triptych encapsulating the universality of the Nazis' brutalizing effect on German life; not only Jews were affected. Because

5. Kristein's comment: You've given this a psychological implication that I'm not aware of. I did not think of him, or these other people, at that time, transformed into brownshirts. But it's open enough; it certainly could be that, and I may have been confronted with that possibility when I drew it. But frequently when I have been confronted with the possibility of interpretation I don't go any further than that single connotation, and whatever happens afterwards, happens.



the representation is meant to be universal, the symbols are clear. Labels are applied almost in the manner of a political cartoon. The symbols faces of the brownshirts are so exaggerated as to be caricature. Across the top, serving almost as titles for each picture, are the words "Kultur," "Jude," and a cross, the three great life-modes that were present in Germany, with Judaism, the one which suffered most, in the center.

Below these titles are dreamlike composite scenes showing violence to various social classes: the intellectual, the shopkeeper (middle class) and the worker. The titles on the books are labels rather than realistic representations; the star of David is certainly a symbol, and the falling man's overall straps are another. That this last symbol was important to Kristein is demonstrated by the fact that he still recalled and was annoyed that the colorist had mistakenly colored the straps the same as the shirt, eight years after he had last seen the story in color.

Note that panel 2 shows a brownshirt about to strike. Although panel 3 is a different scene, the action is carried through and the blow has been struck. In panel 3, the man's outstretched arms parallel, compositionally and in theme, the cross on the wall. The floor tiles are slightly angled, subtly emphasizing the imbalance of the falling man. Note other details, such as the drops of blood from the word "Kultur" in panel 2.

In panel 4 Kristein again juxtaposes image with text. While the text speaks of a "wild uncontrolled wave" of hate, the picture shows the other side of the coin, everything coldly efficient and orderly, with strict horizontal columns of anonymous soldiers and overpowering vertical pillars of Nazi



architecture. The text of the whole flashback section does not describe the extreme registration inherent in fascism, an element one must be aware of to understand its nature. Kristein has added the element here. In fascism the hate and the registration are bonded; this panel and its caption successfully portray the bond.

In contrast to the fascist atrocities in panel 4, each prisoner depicted in panel 5 has an individual, albeit similar expression, each a different manifestation of suffering. The prisoners seem calm, even tranquil. A part of this picture's power is derived from its inspiration, a historical photograph of camp inmates.

Panel 6 is a view from inside a guard tower, a view that Reisman must have seen many times—another clue that Reisman was one of the oppressors, not a victim. The road in this alien shimmer picture suggests a swastika. Again, the scene is orderly, cold flat walls hiding the horror described in the text.

The somber tones are further emphasized in another view of the gas chambers in panel 7. Here the blacks and greys are so strong as to preclude any color. The ledge of the wall sharply divides the panel, and below it, clearly rendered Germans go about their business, trying to avoid the stench. The tree reaches into the top half of the panel; its leaves are blackened.

In panel 1, page 5, Kristein again allows the horror to be expressed in the text, depicting ordinary looking fiction performing what could be, from the evidence of the picture alone, a beneficial operation. When juxtaposed with the text, the lack of horror in the picture is probably more terrifying than a graphic representation of tortures could ever be. Part of the incomprehensible horror of the camps was, in fact, that



many who staffed them treated their grisly tasks as every day jobs.

In panel 2 the innocent looking lamp dominates the scene. Instead of the office locale the text describes, Kristein shows us an image of detached Nazis at their leisure, perhaps too stronger contrast the horrors of the camps. The poses are vaguely reminiscent of George Grosse.<sup>6</sup>

The montage of panel 3 returns us briefly to the present, tying the sweep of history to the drama of the subway. The train's wheels and the pulsating repetition of the Man's face again powerfully call forth the roar of the subway. But the images from Reisman's past literally burn through to the forefront, and the flashback continues.

Panel 4 and 5 appear to depict realistic scenes, yet the extraordinary rendering exudes a dreamlike quality. The bodies appear to float in slow motion down to their common grave. The shades of background and of any delineation of the grass contribute to the unreal effect. Colonel Marie Severin seems to have realized this; she used unrealistic colors, a single solid tone for the figures and another for the backgrounds. Again, note the careful details, such as the baby falling into the pit, and the guard casually lighting a cigarette while standing near the victims' pile of shoes.

Panel 1 on page 6 shows in a visual way what the text states, that the war is over. Both Germany's civilian and military destruction are pictured. In a very effective composition, Kristein contrasts the destroyed German tank in

6. Kristein's comment: The reference to George Grosse would not apply. He is a great artist, but the content of bitter anti is what separates his work from my approach in this story.





# A KRIGSTEIN BIBLIOGRAPHY

## COMICS

This listing of Krigstein's comic book work is as complete as we could make it, but there are certainly many omissions. Particularly his work at Fawcett is not well represented. Any additions by readers will be appreciated. Generally, stories about which there is some doubt have not been included on the list. The most interesting of these doubtful items is a pre-war story, "Bubble," in *KM Komiks* #2 (Summer 1943). Krigstein thinks he may have done a story for Timely at that time, but we have been unable to locate a copy as he can check the art. Readers should take note that some comics which the Overstreet Guide lists as having Krigstein art do not in fact have any.

The quality of Krigstein's comic stories varies widely. As a whole, the EC stories are undoubtedly his finest work, and the Ziff-Davis generally the worst. Really superior stories can be found at any company during any time period, but Krigstein is the first to say that some were done very fast and are very uninteresting.

Issue No.	Date	No. of Pages	Story title, Remarks
<i>Acce High</i> (EC)			
1	Mar-Apr 55	6	The Mascot
2	May-Jun 55	6	Revenge
3	Jul-Aug 55	6	The Spy
4	Sep-Oct 55	6	The Good Luck Piece
5	Nov-Dec 55	6	Spads Were Troup
<i>Adventures Into Terror</i> (Atlas)			
9	Apr 52	5	Second Floor Rear
10	Jun 52	4	The Old Hag
12	Oct 52	5	Horror in the Graveyard
<i>Adventures Into Weird Worlds</i> (Atlas)			
10	Sep 52	5	The Killers
<i>Archie Comics</i> (Hillman)			
v5a2	Jan 48	6	Pickett's Charge at the Battle of Gettysburg (pencil only)
			Captain Spill's Hairy Helper
v5a4	May 51	7	
<i>Atch-Attention News of War</i> (DC)			
128	Oct-Nov 52	6	Topkick
2	D 51-1 53	5/13	Battle Ghost
3	Feb-Mar 53	3/13	60-Second Veteran
5	Jun-Jul 53	5/13	Playoff on Slaughter Hill
<i>All Sports Comics</i> (Hillman)			
2	D 48-1 49	5	The Fly (inked by Beff)
<i>AW True Crime</i> (Atlas)			
42	Jan 51	7	The Highwayman
49	Mar 52	6	King of the Cox Men
<i>Amazing Adventures</i> (Ziff-Davis)			
4	Feb 52	8	Space Pirates on Xarpet
<i>Amazing Detective Cases</i> (Atlas)			
12	May 52	4	The Bertie Escape
<i>Assaulting</i> (Atlas)			
13	May 52	4	Glow's Gold
14	Jun 52	5	Under Gloom
16	Aug 52	6	The Mizer
19	Nov 52	5	Red Call
45	Jan 56	5	The Vagant
47	Mar 56	5	The Hypocrite (61 panels)
<i>Battle</i> (Atlas)			
11	Jul 52	5	Rough Riders
23	Nov 52	5	Last Bullets
<i>Battle Action</i> (Atlas)			
8	Jun 53	5	Sgt. Dagen's Squad
<i>Background</i> (Atlas)			
9	Jan 56	4	Gamboli
<i>Becky Tale</i> (for Young Field) (Atlas)			
1	Oct 53	5	Joseph and his Brothers
<i>Bill Stern's Sports Book</i> (Ziff-Davis)			
Winter 52	7	A Tale of the Gringo Matadors	
<i>Caught</i> (Atlas)			
5	Apr 57	4	Trapped in the Cave

<i>Combat</i> (Atlas)			
4	Sep 52	5	The Task-Killer
<i>Crime Detective Comics</i> (Hillman)			
v1a5	Nov-Dec 48	8	Shakedown
v2a1	Mar-Apr 50	8	Cooked in Oil
v2a4	Sep-Oct 50	9	Now I Can Die Easy...
v2a7	Mar-Apr 51	6	The Hatcher's Castle
<i>Crime Exposed</i> (Atlas)			
12	Apr 52	5	When Thieves Fall Out
13	May 52	6	The Hidden Man
<i>Crime Illustrated</i> (EC) Photo Fiction			
1	Nov-Dec 55	12	Full Gay for Murder (inked by Crandall)
<i>Crime Suspense Stories</i> (EC)			
12	Apr-May 54	7	Monstrous
24	Aug-Sep 54	7	More Blood to Give...
25	Oct-Nov 54	6	Key Chain (61 panels)
27	Feb-Mar 55	6	Just the Speed (61 panels)
<i>Daring Adventures</i> (St. John)			
6	May 54	7	Fire Men Against Belcar
6	May 54	7	The Terrorist
<i>Dead Eye Western Comics</i> (Hillman)			
v1a1	Nov-Dec 48	8	The Outlaw Wore Golden Earrings
v2a3	Apr-May 51	8	Blacksmith Belle Makes Black Silver Horse
<i>Devil's Adventures</i> (Ziff-Davis)			
7	7	1	cover
<i>Erk's Precinct</i> (Deft)			
1399	Apr-Jun 62	1	Inside front cover (illustration)
1399	Apr-Jun 62	22	Blind Man's Bluff...
1399	Apr-Jun 62	2	Back covers illustrations
<i>Explosion Joe</i> (Ziff-Davis)			
5	Oct-Nov 52	7	Explosion Joe—Fris the Red
<i>Famous Scars</i> (Ziff-Davis)			
5	Winter 51	3	Betty Grable
94	Apr 48	5	The Atom—"Driveway for Crime" (inked by Rembrandt)
<i>Programs</i> (Hillman)			
v1a5	Nov 52	3	The Swallow Target
<i>Gun Comics</i> (Atlas)			
12	Jan 52	7	The Dark Highway
28	Nov-Dec 54	6	Numball
<i>Inspector</i> (EC)			
1	Mar-Apr 55	8	Master Race
2	Nov-Dec 55	7	So Much More
<i>Invincible Science Fiction</i> (EC)			
30	Jul-Aug 55	5	Murder
31	Sep-Oct 55	8	Puffblower
32	Nov-Dec 55	6	The Ultimate Weapon
33	Jan-Feb 56	6	One Way Hero
<i>Journey Into Mystery</i> (Atlas)			
34	May 56	4	Someone is Calling (152 panels)
46	Mar 57	4	The Desert Rail (173 panels)
<i>Journey Into Unknown Worlds</i> (Atlas)			
11	Jun 52	5	King of Death
12	Aug 52	5	Water, Water Everywhere
43	Mar 56	5	The Man Who Couldn't Be Reached (59 panels)
<i>Junior Trap the Gully</i> (Price)			
8	Jan-Feb 49	8	Eugene Vitozoo—First Great Detective
10	Jun-Jul 49	9	Conning the Confidence Man
<i>Just a Day</i> (Toytown/Palchao)			
1	Nov 51	7 2/3	Liar
<i>Love Romances</i> (Atlas)			
21	Mar 52	6	I Take this Man
24	Sep 52	4	Kate's Man
28	Apr 54	6	Another Girl's Man
<i>Lowes</i> (Atlas)			
27	Jan 52	6	Should I Marry a G.I.?
<i>Love Tales</i> (Atlas)			
52	Mar 52	6	The Truth about Truly Lester
<i>Mad</i> (EC)			

27	Jan 54	7	From Eternity Back to Eternity	1	Spring 52	4	Death of the Battle Women	War Adventures (Atlas)	5	The Windmill		
28	Nov 54	8	Bringing Back Father (Krigstein pencilled and inked 3 1/2 pages of this story. Other pages were by Bill Elder.)	1	Spring 52	4	Death of the Battle Women	War Adventures (Atlas)	5	The Windmill		
24	Jul 55	5	Out of the Flying Pan and into the Soup (18 stories)	1	Summer 52	7	The Lady of Diamonds	Wood Fantasy (EC)	7	Demon Ship		
26	Oct-Nov 55	5	Tense Troopers and Lucky Bucks (18 stories)	1	Summer 52	7	Outlaws of Vana	Wood Science Fantasy (EC)	6	The Flying Machine		
Mrs (Atlas)	27	Jan 52	5	That's an Order	2	Summer 52	7	Robber Baron of Deacon	23	Mar 54	6	The Pioneer
Myer (Atlas)	27	Jan 52	5	That's an Order	2	Summer 52	7	The First State of Hawaii	24	Jun 54	6	Bodyful
Myer (Atlas)	27	Jan 52	5	That's an Order	2	Summer 52	7	The First State of Hawaii	25	Sep 54	6	The Wreckless Coward (Eizenstein/Panache)
Myer (Atlas)	27	Jan 52	5	That's an Order	2	Summer 52	7	The First State of Hawaii	18	Feb 49	8	His Wife with the Broken Hand
Myer (Atlas)	27	Jan 52	5	That's an Order	2	Summer 52	7	The First State of Hawaii	22	Aug 49	5	Nuggets Natter in Double Trouble
Myer (Atlas)	27	Jan 52	5	That's an Order	2	Summer 52	7	The First State of Hawaii	23	Oct 49	6	Magician of Murder Creek
Myer (Atlas)	27	Jan 52	5	That's an Order	2	Summer 52	7	The First State of Hawaii	24	Dec 49	7	The Trail Back
Myer (Atlas)	27	Jan 52	5	That's an Order	2	Summer 52	7	The First State of Hawaii	24	Jan 50	8	Nuggets Natter Coast to Coast
Myer (Atlas)	27	Jan 52	5	That's an Order	2	Summer 52	7	The First State of Hawaii	24	Feb 50	7	Wild Bill Pross--Death of Nuggets Natter
Myer (Atlas)	27	Jan 52	5	That's an Order	2	Summer 52	7	The First State of Hawaii	26	Apr 50	7	Nuggets Natter in Mystery of the Missing
Myer (Atlas)	27	Jan 52	5	That's an Order	2	Summer 52	7	The First State of Hawaii	27	Jun 50	6	
Myer (Atlas)	27	Jan 52	5	That's an Order	2	Summer 52	7	The First State of Hawaii	Western Fighters (Hillman)			
Myer (Atlas)	27	Jan 52	5	That's an Order	2	Summer 52	7	The First State of Hawaii	1104	Oct-Nov 48	7	The Iron Outcrop
Myer (Atlas)	27	Jan 52	5	That's an Order	2	Summer 52	7	The First State of Hawaii	1107	Apr-May 49	8	The Dirty Little Coward (pencil only)
Myer (Atlas)	27	Jan 52	5	That's an Order	2	Summer 52	7	The First State of Hawaii	1201	Dec 49	8	Bad Soldier
Myer (Atlas)	27	Jan 52	5	That's an Order	2	Summer 52	7	The First State of Hawaii	1202	Nov 51	7	The Last Gasp
Myer (Atlas)	27	Jan 52	5	That's an Order	2	Summer 52	7	The First State of Hawaii	1402	Jan 52	6	The Last Tally Trough
Myer (Atlas)	27	Jan 52	5	That's an Order	2	Summer 52	7	The First State of Hawaii	1403	Feb 52	7	The Bad Dog Floor-walker
Myer (Atlas)	27	Jan 52	5	That's an Order	2	Summer 52	7	The First State of Hawaii	When Coward (Fawcett)			
Myer (Atlas)	27	Jan 52	5	That's an Order	2	Summer 52	7	The First State of Hawaii	73	Jan 46	7	The Iron Outcrop
Myer (Atlas)	27	Jan 52	5	That's an Order	2	Summer 52	7	The First State of Hawaii	78	Sep 46	7	The Dirty Little Coward (pencil only)
Myer (Atlas)	27	Jan 52	5	That's an Order	2	Summer 52	7	The First State of Hawaii	World of Fantasy (Atlas)			
Myer (Atlas)	27	Jan 52	5	That's an Order	2	Summer 52	7	The First State of Hawaii	8	Dec 57	4	The Phantom of the Farm (31 panels)
Myer (Atlas)	27	Jan 52	5	That's an Order	2	Summer 52	7	The First State of Hawaii				
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Myer (Atlas)	27	Jan 52	5	That's an Order	2	Summer 52	7	The First State of Hawaii				
Myer (Atlas)	27	Jan 52	5	That's an Order	2							

Conflict (Ziff-Davis).  
 Fantastic (Ziff-Davis), Vol. 2 No. 3; Vol. 2 No. 5; et al.  
 Galaxy, Vol. 9 No. 2, Nov 54; et al.  
 Harpers Magazine, Dec 60; et al.  
 Hi-Fi Magazine.  
 The New York Times Magazine, 9/29/57; 7/7/63; et al.  
 The Saturday Evening Post, 2/26/66.  
 World-Over (Jewish Education Committee), 4/12/57; 3/15/57;  
 5/3/57; 1/4/58; et al.

## BOOKS

This listing is also substantially complete. Krigele illustrated the cover and/or dust jacket only unless otherwise noted.

Alexander, Lloyd. *Border House August Boudi*. Covenant Books (Farrar, Straus); with interior illus.

———. *The Flagship Rope: Aaron Lopez*. Covenant Books (Farrar, Straus); with interior illus.

Birn, Archie. *Here Buster: The Sea Pup*. Tab Books.

Boone, M. G. *How to Play Baseball*. Alfred A. Knopf.



Cannon, Robert. *Love Affair*. Henry Holt Co.  
 Cary, Joyce. *Accepted by the Lord*. Grosset's Universal Library.  
     *Myself Surprised*. Grosset's Universal Library.  
 The House of Mirth. Grosset's Universal Library.  
 Not Honor More. Grosset's Universal Library.  
 Prisoner of Genoa. Grosset's Universal Library.  
 To Be a Pilgrim. Grosset's Universal Library.  
 Cogswell, The Advertising Career. G. P. Putnam's Sons; with  
     interior illus.  
 Collier, Anne. *Borrowed Treasures*. Alfred A. Knopf; with  
     interior illus.  
 Gordon, Richard. *The Matchmaking Candidate*. McGraw-Hill.  
 The House of Helene and the True Cross. Farrar, Straus;  
     with interior illus.  
 di Prima, Dante. ed. *Various Fables from Various Places*.  
     The World Publishing Co.  
 Evans, H. G. *Jedaddiah Smith, Trail Blazer of the West*.  
     Western Publishing Co.; with interior illus.  
 Fleishner, Gustave. *Madame Society*. Dell Publishing Co.  
 Frierer and Latenser. *Myself Surprised*. In *Modern Literature*.  
     Harcourt, Brace, interior illus. only.  
 Lempman, S. S. *Myself's Space Ship*. Doubleday; with interior  
     illus.  
 Pratt, John. *The Buffalo Soldiers*. Harcourt, Brace.

3. Krupenin's comment: It turned out that what I did was actually a solve of the thing. I made an error of that order. They said it, and when it was in publication and distributed, he discovered it was a solve, and he could not do it after that.

Rothschild, Sylvia. *The Life and Times of I. L. Peretz*.  
Covenant Books (Farrar, Straus); with interior illus.  
Rowland, F. W. *Bo of the Caves*. Waack; with interior illus.  
Stockton, Frank R. *Barons and Brides of our Coast*.  
Looking Glass Library; with interior illus.  
Wadleigh, J. W. *The Bitter Pansies*. E. P. Dutton and Co.  
Annual Report 1957. ABC Paramount.  
Aubel and the Prophet. Covenant Books (Farrar, Straus); with  
interior illus.  
The Virginian. Distributed in Europe for slow readers in the  
Army.

#### RECORD JACKETS

This may be the only one of these listings that is 100%  
complete. It is also probably the most available material;  
these records (or at least the Krigein jackets) have mostly  
been discontinued years ago. A variety of media was used;  
pastels, oils, watercolor, crayon, even pen and ink and  
zips. Most are in color.

Beethoven, Symphonies Nos. 9 and 1. Leipzig Gewandhaus  
Orchestra. Epic SC 6026.  
Hädel, Concerti Op. 6, Nos. 4, 9, and 10. "I Musici."  
Epic LC 3691.

Milford, Les Choéphores. Leonard Bernstein, New York  
Philharmonic. Columbia ML 5796.  
Scarlati, Mass of Santa Cecilia. Utah Symphony Orchestra.  
Bach Gould/Vanguard BG 421.  
Schubert, String Quintet in C Major, Opus 163. The Budapest  
String Quartet. Columbia ML 5938.  
The Three Quartets: Beethoven, Piano Quartet in  
E-Flat Major. The Budapest String Quartet. Columbia ML  
5873.  
Wagner, Music from Three Operas. George Szell, The Cleveland  
Orchestra. Epic LC 3848.  
The Feast of Lights Festival. University of Redlands Choir.  
Columbia LC 5871.  
Oscar Wilde's Fairytales. Spoken Arts 789.  
Songs of the North and South. Mormon Tabernacle Choir.  
Columbia ML 5659.  
Sennacherib. Donald Bell sings Schubert and Loewe. Columbia  
ML 5743. ■■

Below is a cover rough for St. Helena and the True  
Cross. The illustration on the previous page is from  
Barons and Brides of Our Coast.



# B. Krigein

an evaluation by Bbob Stewart

This article is reprinted from *The EC World* Page #4,  
August 1954. It was, in part, a response to some less than  
enthusiastic comments on Krigein by EC's profile and  
distinguished critic Larry Stark, and was originally entitled "B.  
Krigein: An Evaluation and Defense." It does not cover all of  
Krigein's EC stories because it was written before many of  
them appeared.

It was near the end of 1953 that Bernard Krigein, once  
president of the Society of Comic Book Illustrators, joined  
EC. As well as I can make out from correspondence directed  
both to myself and EC, Krigein was not received with great  
applause, brass bands and dancing in the streets by the EC  
fans. Some have gone so far as to vehemently attack him,  
claiming that he is ruining the stories that he is assigned to  
illustrate. No statement could be more untrue, as I hope to  
show in this article. I think it is time he is given some of the  
credit that he deserves.

I first became aware of Krigein's existence in 1952, when  
he was at Ziff-Davis doing work for *Amazing Adventures*,  
*Space Shatters* and *Space Patrol*. The oldest signed Krigein  
work in my files is *Space Shatters* #1, dated Spring, 1952. The  
entire magazine was Krigein's illustration except for a two page  
flier. Were it not for the fact that his name is scribbled in the  
splash panel of page one, I never would have guessed that the  
work was by Krigein. His style of 1952 was fairly tight, with  
an almost total absence of the sloppiness and crowsfooting of  
his latter day work. His male *Space Shatters* character has a  
small resemblance to the Krigein characters of today with  
his twisted eyebrows and oddly shaped head. There was  
nothing very outstanding or appealing about his *Space Shatters*  
style, but it is good work nonetheless, properly done in the  
correct perspective and proportions.

*Amazing Adventures* #6, Fall, 1952, had a Krigein story  
drawn in a style similar to *Space Shatters*, although he had  
loosened up a little this time, looking somewhat like George  
Wunder's "Terry and the Pirates." The cover painting of this  
issue is unsigned, but Krigein is slumped all over it.

I have the first two *Space Patrol*s, with all the "Space  
Patrol" tales illustrated by Krigein. They were done about the  
same time as the work mentioned above, but the style is quite  
different again. The *Space Patrol* work is loose, sprawling,  
and speedily laid out. The bold, black brush strokes resemble  
the work of Milton Caniff.

I also have some Atlas comics from this year which contain  
work that might be Krigein, but it's unsigned so I can't say  
for sure ("The Man Who Couldn't Be Killed," *Spotlight* #46;  
"The Boy Who Was Afraid," *Strange Tales* #10). These have  
the same bold brush strokes of the *Space Patrol* work with the  
addition of a lot of crowsfooted pen work.

Krigein's first EC effort was "Dreadful Ship," *World  
Fantasy* #22. His style had changed considerably since the  
previous year. The new Krigein is one of thin pen lines with  
some sketchy pen shading and crowsfooting, but not with the  
sprawling flat applied look of the *Strange Tales* and

*Spellbound* work. He frequently backs away for a scene that  
covers acres of landscape in a single small two by three inch  
panel, but can abruptly move in for a Jack Webb-type close-up  
or even an extreme close-up with only a part of the face in the  
panel. His backgrounds are usually large black and white solid  
areas, smooth and contrasting. Using solid blacks and whites in  
the manner that he does, he can get a distinctly modern feeling  
in his work. The page six splash showing the "solid planning" is  
outstanding, with the fellow crawling out of his own mouth.

When the two EC science fiction titles combined, the  
outside appearance of the magazine was not the only thing  
new. There was also a subtle change in its atmosphere, as if the  
editors felt that their creation had finally reached maturity. It  
is therefore fitting that the first *World Science-Fantasy*  
contained a story of classic proportions; Ray Bradbury's "The  
Flying Machine." This is one of the few times that EC has  
really done justice to a Bradbury story, partly because the  
story did not have to be condensed much and also because of  
the wonderful art. There is an almost perfect affinity between  
writer and artist; Krigein has depicted the emotions and  
moods that Bradbury follows with words. At the very outset  
of the story Krigein follows right along with Bradbury in  
setting the mood of the tale. The lead splash shows a vast  
expanse of land, green and beautiful, as Bradbury might have  
imagined it, unexploited and untainted by the civilization yet to  
come. The emperor says the air is sweet, and the sweetness  
radiates from the scene.

Page four is a nice layout, with two vignettes bearding the  
middle panel row. The guards' bright uniforms contrast with  
the whiteness behind them, and the emperor's portrait is clear  
and concise.

The second panel of the last page displays a subtle  
unconscious to artists: "The executioner whined his sword  
axe..." The noise startles the birds and makes them flutter  
about in confusion. It's all so logical—the flying birds show as  
that after the executioner whined his sword axe it did reach its  
destination. In panel six on the same page we get another  
glimpse of the beauty of ancient China that came so close to  
annihilation. But the smoke cloud promises us that it will live  
on because the emperor has done his duty. From the tone of  
Bradbury's letter in *World Science-Fantasy* #25, it sounds as if  
he were really pleased for the first time.

The *Vault of Horror* #58 contained another Krigein  
Oriental tale, "Pipe Dream," which looks as though Craig  
wrote specifically for Krigein after seeing the success of "The  
Flying Machine." But there is a noticeable difference in the  
style of the two stories. His style in "The Flying Machine" was  
smoothly flowing and permeated with the mood of  
ancient times. "Pipe Dream," in contrast, is done in a raw  
sketchy style appropriate for its contemporary characters. The  
dream sequences of the two killings are imaginatively done,  
and did like the splash on page five where the first panel showing  
Chen Chi Yang lying in his opium den fades into his dream in  
panel two.

"Mossytree" in *Crime SuperStories* #22 is noteworthy for



its first page, which has no splash panel or balloons. Feldstein designed the opening page of the story to get across the position of the leading character, and Krigein follows through again. With the help of Zipatone he gets the idea over in a subtle and simple way: each panel is perfectly and precisely balanced. In some cases it appears that balancing the scene would be impossible if drawn realistically, but this doesn't faze Krigein! In the use of Zipatone he departs from reality to show the mood and precision. In panel three the Zipatone strip across the top balances perfectly with the desk at the bottom. In panel five Milton is framed precisely within the Zipatone and it overlaps in one corner to balance precisely with the desk in the opposite corner. In panel six Milton sits precisely at his precisely centered desk precisely in line with the window. The Zipatone in panel two is cut precisely to be precisely in line with the Zipatone in the panel below it. To sum up the whole page . . . it is precise.

The books in the last panel of the page seem out of place, though. One would think that Milton would have strung them more precisely. But this is quibbling. The crosshatching on page two is disturbing too. It distracts from the sterile feeling established on page one. I would have been content if Krigein had omitted his crosshatching here.

Krigein put his cartoons in "From Eternity Back to Here," in *Mad* #12, using the traditional and classical approach to caricature rather than the "Mad style." The drawing of Pata coming out of The New Senate Club is so perfect and right that I laugh each time I see it. He has that facial expression on his face that he can keep the likeness, but is so doing that he has made them seem to lose that breath of life that Woody takes such pains to put into his characters. However, perhaps Prew is purposely expressionless.

In panel two on page one Prew is talking to Warden but

facing the reader so that we can see the caricature. Krigein has emphasized the caricature, calling attention to them at the expense of the story. I don't quite get the swaying bodies either. This looks rather abnormal . . . except for page two, panel four, where Prew is playing his horn in the exact swaying position that he did in the bar scene of the motion picture. His pants are even wrinkled in the same way. There are some dubious attempts at humor—Prew lying on his side in panel two, page two, and that long neck in panel one, page four.

But there are many other points worth praising—the use of the now familiar photograph of Kerr and Lancaster (probably



Kurtzman's idea), the excess of hands in panel four, and the angle on the row of windows in the back room exactly as seen in the movie. Krigein's *Mad* art has an undefinable and distinctive appeal all its own.

"You, Murderer," in *Shock SuperStories* #14, opens with another masterful splash. Using spottily applied crosshatch, Krigein gives us a well drawn scene of a foggy and deserted slum area, immediately setting the mood for horror to come. He does as well as possible in drawing scenes which you are witnessing since you are a character in the story. It can't help but be a little unnatural, just as it has been when the idea has been tried in motion pictures (the subjective camera looking through the eyes of the company president in *Executive Suite*, for example).

The hypnotizing scenes on page two are superb. You can look at panel five steadily and, by God, it feels like you are being hypnotized! It seems as if you could just let your brain fall into his eyes. Then, in the next panel, his hypnotic face is horribly distorted as you lose control of your thoughts. The last panel on page two shows the only thing you are conscious of—his eyes. The possibility of being hypnotized by drawings seems unlikely, but Krigein came damn close to it here!

"The Pioneer" (*Weird Science-Fantasy* #24), "The Bath" (*Tales from the Crypt* #42) and "Praise Schooner" (*Tales from the Crypt* #40) are all completely illustrated, with the latter story a prime example of the way Krigein heightens the drama by concentrating his effects, alternating tension and release.

"Crime SuperStories" #24, with "More Blessed to Give . . ." reveals a number of examples of an interesting Krigein trademark—that of tilting a character's head so that the face is lowered and only partly visible. It's a perfectly natural position, but one that the other artists always leave to Krigein.

The imaginative work on "Bellyful," in *Weird Science-Fantasy* #25, makes this old house plot a potent experience. The spaceship scenes in *Craft* and *Zipatone* are nicely done, and that monster really looks like one helluva beast in the scene where you can compare his size with the man beneath him.

In *Vault of Horror* #18 Krigein is back with some new innovations in "The Catacombs." Most noteworthy is the absence of balloons in some of the panels; instead, speech is set in quotation marks above the panel. Since *Flash Gordon*



switched to balloons only Hal Foster's *Prince Valiant* remains as an example of the balloonless strip. It's not new to comics, but it's new to EC. However, when the speech floats along with no balloon stem showing its origin, it seems unnatural, as if the speaker never really said the words at all.

Zipatone is used throughout the story, not just for shading, but holding as much information in the art as the words link. The first panel on page three and the *CinemaScope*-type panel on the first page use the Zipatone to particular advantage. Krigein manipulates it skillfully during the story to give the feeling of gloom, darkness and depth—a feeling that you could

walk into the panel and hear your echo far back in the catacombs.

And that is the total amount of work that Bernie Krigein has done for EC at this writing . . .

His work is unique in that he uses different styles for different types of stories . . . a crap modern story for a modern story like "More Blessed to Give . . ." rough semihumor suitable for the modern Chinatown of "Pige Dreams," smooth pseudo-Oriental art to match Bradbury's "The Flying Machine." And Krigein knows just how much to vary his style to produce the effect he wants to create. He's already shown us about four or five different styles which, it would seem, are enough to indicate the great versatility this artist has, but perhaps he has even more saved up for some odd types of stories yet to spawn from Feldstein's fertile brain.

There has never been a comic artist quite like Krigein. He's not content to just plot along; he is constantly experimenting with new techniques and ideas. It won't be surprising if he turns up one day with a story illustrated in abstract expressionism.

And I'm worried. If you anti-Krigein Fan-Addicts continue to write beating letters to EC about Krigein, he might be relieved of his duties there, and he'll have to return to crap-comics that will never have a story of good enough quality to be worth giving with Krigein's work. Those who appreciate his magnificent talent can only sit back and hope that the others will develop an appreciation of Krigein, and hope that Gaines and Feldstein, recognizing a great art talent, keep him on the staff.

Like every new thing that comes along that he doesn't like, Stark says about Krigein, "Give him six months." But I don't see why . . . he'll be just as good then as he is now. ■■







# QUA BROT

editor's  
o comments

Although it may appear at first glance that "The EC Fanzine" series has been set aside because of this special issue, actually a large part of the issue has been reprinted from early fanzines.

In my chronology, Talk with R. Krigstein was the last publication that could be considered part of the original EC fandom. At that, it already overlapped the first publications of the next fandom: *Alter Ego*, *The Rocket's Blast*, *On the Drawing Board*, *Comic Art*, et al. At the time I was unfamiliar with these other publications, with the exception of *Comic Art*. When Bob Stewart and I first thought of doing an interview with Krigstein, we planned to send it to *Comic Art*, although its editor Dan and Maggie Thompson probably never knew that. My own recollection is that we did know that there was some convergence of interest in comic art fanzines through the response that the "All in Color for a Dime" series in *Xero* was getting [Bob was art editor of *Xero* and co-editor of its final issue].

However, I doubt that this general revival of interest had as much to do with our decision to interview Krigstein as the discussions that Bob and I had at that time about EC and the art of comics. We each thought that one of the high points of both was the work of Bernie Krigstein.

At the time EC seemed much further in the dark past than it does now. Seven years had elapsed since the last EC comic had appeared. Would an artist who had gone on to other things still want to talk about those days? We soon found out that the answer was yes.

The evening before the interview we went over to Larry Nix's to look over Krigstein's stories, which neither Bob nor I had seen for several years. We rekindled the excitement we had felt when we first read his work, rediscovering the redactionary concepts he had developed. Larry peep-pocked our excitement and suggested that Krigstein had subdivided and reprinted

panels because it was easier to draw that way.

The next night, as we lugged Larry's tape recorder on the long ride out to Krigstein's, I felt a tension. I was certain that I saw well thought-out concepts in Krigstein's work; everything in the stories indicated that we would be meeting a man who cared a great deal about his work and who would be able to articulate all these concepts. On the other hand, although I had met other comic artists who loved their work, I had never met any who could talk about it the way I hoped Krigstein would. What if Larry were right?

Almost immediately after we arrived at each other's homes, Krigstein, of course, was getting face-to-face feedback for practically the first time, and we were talking to a person whose work we admired. But I've been in similar situations which were awkward because my concept of what was interesting in the artist's work was not at all shared by the artist. With Krigstein we found that we were talking the same language. Beyond that, we found that Krigstein and we all had thought of the same projects he might have taken on, and that his work had the same exterior associations for each of us. In fact, Krigstein is still the only comics artist I know of who might mention Dorshenko or be able to recognize a Paul Cadmus painting from a brief description.

Because the conversational aspect of our visit, which revealed these discoveries of common interests, seemed important to us, we left much of it in and labeled the result "Talk with." In the version appearing in this issue the more inconsequential conversation has been excluded, so it has been retitled "An Interview."

Talk with R. Krigstein was mimeographed, with an offset back cover, in an edition of 200 copies. This was double the print run of most fanzines then (hand collating is dull work). I don't remember just why we chose to do this. The only advertising we did was a flyer



sent out with *Xero*. Most copies were given away to people we thought would be interested. A portion of the interview was translated and printed without our permission in the French comics magazine *Giff Wiff*.

Krigstein was unique among comic artists I have interviewed in that he made almost no changes in the transcript. Perhaps this was in part due to the fact that he was no longer in the field and therefore didn't have to worry about how his comments might affect a future assignment. He did express misgivance about some passages where it might seem that he was postulating or lecturing. I felt that what he was saying was important, and convinced him to leave them in.

To my knowledge, the only other EC fanzine to have serious coverage of Krigstein's work was *George Jealousy's The EC World Press* (changed to *The EC Press* by the fourth issue, actually), which featured the six page evaluation by Bob Stewart that is reprinted in this issue.

Larry Stark was the first to give EC serious and mature criticism, and his long essay-by-story critiques are well known, although not well read due to their unavailability. Stewart was less prolific; see Krigstein pieces and a long similar essay on Mad in *Hooked* were his only two extended thematic pieces. Perhaps Larry wrote with more professional skill (after all, he had just graduated from Rutgers and Bob was still in high school), but I liked Bob's approach better. Larry concentrated most of his analysis on the literary aspect of a story. Bob looked at the visual—not just as illustrations, but examining how they were used to tell the story. His observations on Krigstein held up well after 20 years.

The "Master Race" piece in this issue started out to be a reprint also. Art Spiegelman had written a college paper analyzing the story in 1968, which was subsequently printed in the *Harvard College literary magazine*. I asked Art if I could reprint it, and he made additions and revisions to it in note form and asked me to shape up a final draft. I became very involved and completely rewrote it. I then sent it to David Kanakoro, who did another rewrite which doubled the length of the manuscript. I took his version and turned out two more complete drafts. The final version is so different from the first that it could hardly be called a reprint.

We want to emphasize that each reader must go to Krigstein's story

Mike Jealousy  
and  
John Bennett

TALK

with

R. Krigstein

directly to discover what is there. Perhaps the reader's discoveries will be different than ours. When Krigein leaves that essay on "Master Race" would be in this issue, he was concerned that a written analysis of the story might mislead the reader. In general we share this concern.

An excellent example of what I'm talking about is film critic Pauline Kael's booklength essay *Flaming Kae*, a critical analysis of *Citizen Kane* and a history of the writing of its screenplay. Ms. Kael handles prose brilliantly and develops a number of important theories. However, she interprets movies from a very literary viewpoint, and seems blind to the natural interplay of visual and theatrical aspects of the medium. Her book gives the unmistakable impression that the screenplay is the essential part of a film, and that director Orson Welles had little responsibility for the screenplay of *Citizen Kane*.

Her conclusions as to who wrote the screenplay are debatable, but the real point is that the reader of *Flaming Kae* may unconsciously accept Ms. Kael's mistaken assumptions. He will undoubtedly know a lot more about *Citizen Kane* after reading her book, but his knowledge will all be aimed in the wrong direction. In reading our essay on "Master Race" the reader should be just as wary of accepting our blarney or critical focus.

Krigein worked with a very definite awareness that his work would be printed with color, and one should bear this in mind when studying the reproductions in this issue. "Master Race" has been reprinted in *The EC Horror Library* of the 1950's (Noddy), which utilized the excellent color guides that Marie Severin did for the original comic. Unfortunately, the book, although printed beautifully, suffers from abominable color separations. And though the separations in the comic are excellent, the printing is poor and off-register in most copies.

If you want to see "Master Race" faithfully reproduced from the original art, with no color, be sure to get *EC Portfolio #6* from Russ Cochran when it comes out. Cochran's portfolio series are 11 x 16 inch books beautifully printed on heavy stock. Every story there is practically the equivalent of reading from the original art. Two other Krigein stories have already appeared in earlier portfolios: "The Flying Machine" in #2 (out of print), and "Belfry" in #4. Each of these beautifully produced portfolios contain about five EC stories. At the present time 3, 4 and 5 are available at \$20 each, or all three for \$50. Order from Russ Cochran, Box 347, West Plains, Mo. 65773.

Finally, a word should be said about the Krigein bibliography. Although this issue of *Skye Tront* had hopefully raised the level of interest in Krigein's work, it would be depressing if it produced a cult that collected all Krigein comics without regard to their quality. Because a checklist is a signal to a collector, I debated whether to run this feature. But

in the final analysis I don't think Krigein's work appeals greatly to the collector type. I hope not.

#### MORE PLAGS

The beautiful signed and numbered Kutzman print that we mentioned last issue is still available from Bill Peckman, Room 403, 63 East 156th Street, New York, N.Y. 10022 for \$5 (sent first class in a sturdy mailing tube).

Even though it has nothing to do with EC, we want to mention a new underground comics magazine called *Avenue*, which features the work of Robert Crumb, Art Spiegelman, Gilbert Shelton, Jay Lynch, Justin Green, Spain, Jim Osborne, Bill Griffith and others. It's proof that the best of the underground cartoonists are still flourishing and better than ever. Highly recommended. It is a quarterly book in an 8 1/2 x 11 inch format; two issues are out and a third is on the way at this writing. Cost: \$1.25 per copy (plus 25¢ shipping), from The Peist Mist, Inc., 830 Folger Avenue, Berkeley, Calif. 94710.

—John Benson



The following letter of comment was written shortly after the original publication of the Krigein interview:

October 2, 1963  
Krigein, calling Williamson "too artistic" is rather strange, because I can visualize any number of unimaginative hacks that work in the comics field applying that label to Krigein. And Benda is artistic, but there's no "too" about it. As a matter of fact, I don't think there's any such thing as being "too artistic." Williamson, I think, did not work along the lines of fine art, but was more of an illustrator, his main points being style, good anatomy, and good action. A man can realize all these elements and still not be a good artist. Not that I'm saying anything against Williamson.

I'm sorry that you didn't ask Krigein about his work for *Roy's Life*. Of all of

Krigein's work that I've seen, I would consider this his only failure. They were blurry web paintings that looked just like hash. I'm wondering what happened to him there; whether he just wasn't interested or working on a new angle that never got off the ground.

It's a funny thing, but the story that Krigein is most disenchanted with, *67th Precinct*, occupies a warm spot in my heart (that may sound overly sentimental). I think there Krigein did do some good caricature, had about two pages reminiscent of his old EC tone-sheet work, and made the story come to life. Of course, I was well aware that he was thinking in EC with the lightning in the guy's head and all, but that added to my total appreciation. I also liked the story, with that hawk seeming to be the catalyst of the action... and with dialogue like, "Yes... right through the heart... the heart... the heart of the disease called love," and, "But when I look at the lives of you and the heroes of this world I recall never losing my sight or my life in losing me the world loses one of its great artists. Does it?" and, "Don't cry, Teddy! In death I may develop an even greater mode of vision." The whole thing seemed to have a mystical quality, but I've read similar things from DeL, probably written by the same writer, and they've never come to life, having a confused sort of feeling. Krigein did add greatly to the story, and I wish he had continued with this series. Even if the story was "abandoned," it was a refreshing takeoff from the monotonous sloop that goes into most comic book plots today.

Krigein's remarks about visual arts being rated lower than the literary arts brings to mind P. M. Sully's remark to me that I can't comment on your art—I'm verbally oriented." The implication is, I think, that he looks the artist's jargon to describe art, but I think it goes much deeper than that. The present reason for visual arts being rated on a lower scale than the written word is the concern within our society with communication; because in a mechanized state the individual feels himself to be apart, or alienated, from other people, his job, the world, etc. And the written word is a more intimate form of communication than art, I suspect that more primitive man would place a greater emphasis on art that they can see or hear. It is significant that the Renaissance produced greater artists than writers, for even in those times literacy was quite high.

—Steve Siles  
New York

Lastly in this comment, penned just after the writer had learned that this issue of *Skye Tront* would be an all Krigein issue.

November 30, 1974  
I will make it a point not to include this issue as part of my life.

—Gary Arlington  
San Francisco



